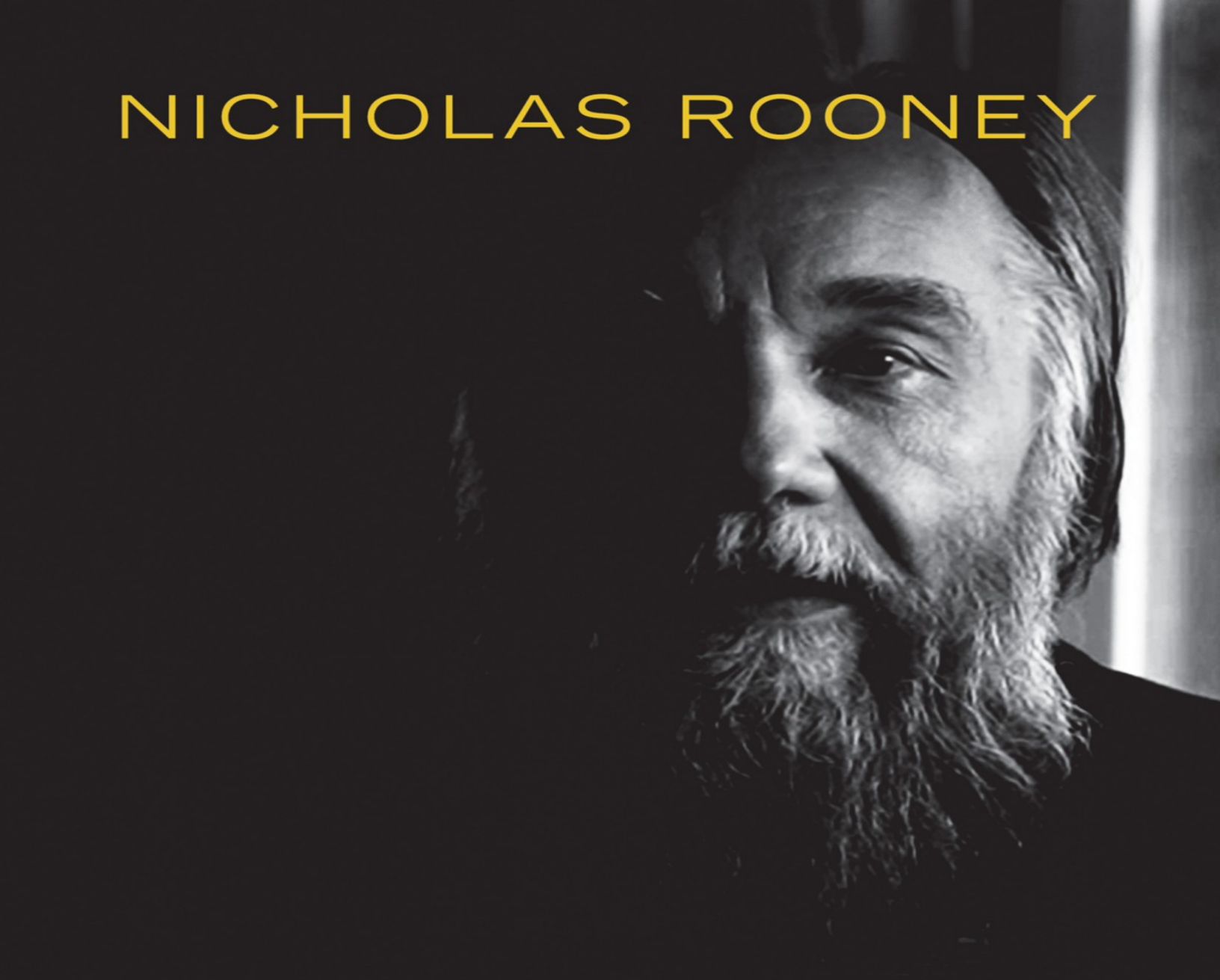
NICHOLAS ROONEY



TALKING TO THE WOLF

THE ALEXANDER DUGIN INTERVIEWS

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The Coronet

When for the thorns with which I long, too long,

With many a piercing wound,

My Saviour's head have crowned,

I seek with garlands to redress that wrong:

Through every garden, every mead,

I gather flowers (my fruits are only flowers),

Dismantling all the fragrant towers

That once adorned my shepherdess's head.

And now when I have summed up all my store,

Thinking (so I myself deceive)

So rich a chaplet thence to weave

As never yet the King of Glory wore:

Alas, I find the serpent old

That, twining in his speckled breast,

About the flowers disguised does fold,

With wreaths of fame and interest.

Ah, foolish man, that wouldst debase with them,

And mortal glory, Heaven's diadem!

But Thou who only couldst the serpent tame,

Either his slippery knots at once untie;

And disentangle all his winding snare;

Or shatter too with him my curious frame,

And let these wither, so that he may die,

Though set with skill and chosen out with care:

That they, while Thou on both their spoils dost tread,

May crown thy feet, that could not crown thy head.

Andrew Marvell

(1621–1678)

Preface

This book serves as a companion piece to my documentary film *The Wolf in the Moonlight,* which was shot in Russia in 2018. It includes all the interviews, many of which I was not able to fit into the film, which I did throughout that same year with the enigmatic philosopher, geopolitician and informal adviser to President Putin, Professor Alexander Dugin. A man who dreams of overthrowing the current world order and carrying out a tumultuous metaphysical and geopolitical revolution. But, at what price? At the heart of these interviews lies an attempt to understand the essence of this man from a geopolitical, philosophical and spiritual perspective. Over this year of unprecedented access to Professor Dugin, we get a fascinating insight into both the man and the inner soul of deep Russia, as well as a unique experience of how he thinks and what he thinks on a whole range of vital subjects.

Mr Dugin, who is under sanction by the US, has all too easily been written off and caricatured in the West as a kind of bogeyman, being called variously a fascist, neo-Nazi occultist, ultranationalist, or just simply Putin's propagandist with nicknames like 'Putin's Brain' and 'Putin's Rasputin'. However, I don't think such descriptions really capture his true nature and are often simply used just to shut down debate about this important thinker. As these interviews reveal, Dugin is much more complex than this; he is a man in a state of perpetual war. At times he referred to himself as a sort of Kissinger or Merlin figure. And he was often very critical of President Putin and even admitted that he doesn't know how to consistently make his ideas the driving force behind the decisions of people in power, but can only provide a fleeting (and sometimes powerful) form of influence. Perhaps some might prefer to describe him as an iconoclast, a bearer of the Radical Subject and a dangerous thinker. This book is not an apology for Mr Dugin or his thoughts — as he himself stated to me, he is more than capable of defending himself. Rather, it is an attempt to clear up these misperceptions surrounding him, and let him explain himself and his thoughts in his own words, so perhaps a more balanced and accurate picture of him can be formed. Nevertheless, readers are free to draw their own conclusions about him and to decide whether or not I succeeded in my attempt to draw out the essence of this controversial figure. In any case, I hope this book will at least encourage people to consider new ideas and open themselves up to debate. Indeed, perhaps if there is anything Dugin should be especially commended for, it is his efforts to reawaken in us the importance of the eternal, the sacred, the poetic, as well as a deep contemplation of time, history and being, and the necessity to always keep death before our eyes.

This book is divided into four main sections based on the seasons of the year when the interviews took place, i.e. Winter, Spring, Summer, Autumn. There is no particular coherence to each season and throughout we discuss a wide range of topics, everything from philosophy and faith to geopolitics, grand strategy, espionage, war, history, beauty, time, the purpose of life, and many other particular subjects including the ongoing crisis in Ukraine, multipolarity and Dugin's magnum opus *Noomachia*. To provide a further intriguing dimension to this fascinating character, I include the two lectures Professor Dugin gave on the Logoi of India and Eastern Europe, and the two fireside chats we had at a monastery. These can be found at the end of the third chapter. In addition, you will find various photos from the film throughout the book, which should help readers (especially those lacking in imagination) to better appreciate the general atmosphere of our conversations.

My approach to the interviews somewhat followed the style of a Platonic dialogue where I asked Alex open questions to gently reveal his opinion on particular topics, and then we discussed the matter further in informal free-flowing conversation. On the positive side, this allowed me to cover a large number of issues. But it came at the expense of not being able (mostly due to time constraints) to delve deeper into certain topics. I have to admit that this was sometimes very frustrating. One way I tried to mitigate this problem was to repeat certain subjects again and again. The reader might at times find this repetition tiresome, for which I apologise, but it did at least enable me to winkle out more information and clarify certain issues, though of course not everything. Also, due to the nature of free-flowing informal conversation we were able to broach difficult topics in a perhaps more natural and delicate way. But as a consequence of this we did tend to drift off topic fairly easily and not explore or answer certain issues, which is again rather unfortunate. The questions I asked do not necessarily reflect my personal opinions, but rather were used to explore topics I consider to be important or to provoke a reaction in order to reveal certain truths. Throughout our conversations I tried to offer counter-arguments in order to enhance the discussion, but I certainly confess my limitations in being able to effectively and consistently counter all the sagacious points of my learned interlocutor. Indeed, I was not more argumentative and aggressive as some people in the West would no doubt have liked me to be because I think what's needed now most of all is just really to try to listen and understand each other. And Mr Dugin, regardless of your opinion of him, is a fascinating person to listen to. In short, these are some of the main successes and failures of my approach. Moreover, as Professor Dugin conjured up so many interesting and controversial ideas, whose implications I am not able to fully explore and analyse in this work, I will no doubt come back to them in later books.

Regarding the overall accuracy of the details of our conversations, the following points must be borne in mind. Despite my best efforts, there were on occasions

difficulties in understanding the content of the recordings of the interviews and so mistakes could have been made there. This is unfortunately one of the normal consequences of making recordings and writing transcripts. Equally, Alexander's statements (and indeed sometimes my own) were subject to grammatical correction in order to help them be as understandable as possible to readers. This of course posed the risk of misinterpretation of certain words and phrases, but Alexander was ready to make all comments necessary to correct any serious misunderstandings. Indeed, as I was finalising this book, Professor Dugin in late June 2022 extensively checked, corrected and updated it (for example, by adding footnotes to certain sections). Nevertheless, as the author of this book I take overall responsibility for any mistakes found within.

Another question of note is why we did the interviews in English and not Russian. Although I do speak Russian and was happy to do the interviews in this language, the desire to do them in English came not from me but from Professor Dugin himself. He believed that because Russian is his mother tongue he could too easily hide in it using rhetoric and cynical expressions, whereas due to his limitations in English he would have to be clear and concise, which is essential when discussing very serious and important topics. I did not object to this and so we proceeded as such.

In terms of acknowledgements, I wish to extend my sincere thanks to Mr Dugin for kindly participating in this project, and to his assistants Daria and Sonia for their excellent organisational aid. I am also grateful to Janna Vladimirov, Franz Koch and the rest of my film crew for their invaluable help. I would like to offer a special thanks to my family for their patience and support during this long period of writing. And last but not least, many thanks to Arktos for agreeing to publish this work.

On a final note, although these interviews took place four years ago I do not believe they have lost any of their potency. Of course, some local political and military situations have developed further since then (for example, the leaders of various countries in the West have changed and the situation in Ukraine has exploded into a very dangerous hot war). But the fundamental points we discussed are still relevant; the eternal nature of the soul has not changed, and the West and Russia remain locked in conflict on the same geopolitical, philosophical and spiritual points (e.g. over the structure of the new world order, the concept of unity and plurality, and the classification of the other). Indeed, now that the tumultuous events of 2022 have no doubt shattered the paradigm of trust, mutual understanding and cooperation of the last thirty years between the West and Russia, perhaps in some ways this book takes on more urgency. So, I humbly offer it as the basis for a potential new dialogue between these two parties on geopolitical, philosophical and spiritual matters of profound importance in the hope that this might foster peace and mutual understanding for the future — something which we very much need in these dangerous times ahead if we are

to avoid another great war. For the holy wisdom of man echoes in a child's footsteps, not in the exalted thrones of the Morning Star.

Nicholas Rooney

Summer 2022

Chapter 1

Winter

Introduction

Our first discussions took place over two chilly days in Moscow. The atmosphere was polite and cordial, but nevertheless a certain tension rippled through the air. Our topics of conversation ranged from the profound to the absurd, from art to life, from death to eternity, and from parrots to Putin. Yet, every twist, every turn provided a new nuance and angle to this extraordinary character and thinker. Oftentimes, I wondered how original was this man really, from whose philosophical larder did he like to taste, did he have a sense of humour, and what would he dare to say next. To put it simply, it was a fascinating introduction to the mysterious Wolf. Please enjoy this short but sweet opening salvo!

We begin in a cosy restaurant in downtown Moscow with the snow falling all around us…

February 17

Nick (N): Alexander, thank you very much for joining us here today.

Dugin (D): You are welcome.

N: Some people in the West call you the most dangerous philosopher in the world, do you agree with this statement and why do you think you have been called this?

D: I think that the essence of philosophy and human thought is to be dangerous. So, to be human is dangerous. It is an unbalanced position in the world because a human being is an open question. A question that precedes an answer and to think is the same as to think dangerously and to be is the same as to be dangerously. It is the human essence. And any thinker that is not considered to be dangerous is not a thinker at all. He repeats just banal things. So, what is comfortable cannot be called philosophical thought. So, I think that recognition to be dangerous is the same as recognition to be a thinking person. To be a philosopher in the original meaning of this word. I understand that when I am called the most dangerous man in the world as some American commentators use as a kind of label for me, but I disagree absolutely, because there are so many maniacs, serial killers, and war criminals and civil criminals that are much more dangerous than

me. So, I am not absolutely the most dangerous man in the world. But, if I'm considered to be the most dangerous philosopher, then I am considered to be more of a philosopher than the other philosophers. It is indeed the highest appraisal of my philosophical thought. I presume that there is some underlying political agenda in this term. But, philosophically speaking it is the highest appreciation of the quality of my thoughts. If I am found to be dangerous, that is the same as to be recognised as a philosopher.

N: Let's explore some philosophical ideas then. First of all, how do you conceive of 'being'? I know you are influenced by Heidegger and his concept of *Dasein*, but what exactly do you personally think 'being' is?

D: So, first of all I'm sure that 'being' is something that is not given to us as something granted. It is not something obvious. We are devoid of it, 'being'. So we need to make a quest for 'being'. So, that is the meaning and essence of philosophy, asking about what is 'being'. How is 'being'? Where is 'being'? What are the connections and relations to 'being'? 'Being' is something that has to do with the truth. And 'being' and truth, both of them are hidden always. Obvious truth is not truth. We need to seek it and reveal it in order to manifest it. It is the same for 'being'. 'Being' is something hidden. 'Being' manifests its presence by its absence, and vice-versa its absence by its presence. So, there is a kind of dialectic between essence and being. So, there is *Seiende* and *Sein* in Heidegger. That means that when something exists, something is, that doesn't mean that there is really 'being' inside of it. So 'being' could be absent in what exists, so we need to seek it. And it is a kind of foundation, the ground. And there is some metaphysical theory that is precisely the foundation of existence. It is not 'being', but some 'non-being'. So, for example in *Parmenides* by Plato, there is an idea that unity that is the ground for everything could not *exist*, could not *be*, it is something that precedes 'being'. So, 'being' is an open question. It is not the same as something that is present to us. And in order to find out what 'being' is, we need to engage in a very serious and profound metaphysical search. It is nothing banal. It is not the most general predicate for everything as it was thought in the alienating metaphysics and ontologies. So, 'being' is the most problematic thing. So, I think that finally any kind of philosophical quest is coming to discover the mystery of 'being', to understand 'being', to grasp 'being', to find 'being'. And I don't think that this quest has an end because 'being' is at the same time something that has an end and something that has no end. And that is a kind of paradox. And the concept of unity of the one of Plato and Plotinus as well. So, 'being' is not an antithesis for 'not-being' or nothing. So, 'being' and nothing are not in contradiction. There is something that unites them. So, the question of 'being' and the search for 'being', it is as well the search for the Abyss, and this search is already inside of the Abyss. So, that is a kind of explosion of the metaphysical void and metaphysical blackness. And inside of this blackness we are not receiving the answer, we are putting our question. So, sometimes or maybe always the question is more

important than the answer. So, and what is really terrible and fatal and repellent is a premature or early answer. An answer for the question that you didn't pose. So, that is the real problem, the catastrophe, the fail. The epic fail is to receive an answer for a question that you didn't ask. So, we need to be very careful with questions, because it is human nature to question. So, the other beings, they don't question. They are living, they are existing, they are hunting prey, but they don't question anything. Questioning is a purely human affair. And to be essentially human, we are essentially asking and questioning. So, that is a part of our innermost nature. And I think that you have put the right question about what is 'being' and how we understand 'being'. If we concentrate on this question we exist humanly. If we forget it, and forget to ask, if we take something that is not given or granted as something that is given and granted, then we commit the most important, the most serious and terrible metaphysical crime: we stop asking about 'being'. So, and by doing that we are demeaning our dignity, we are dehumanising ourselves by the absence of the question of 'being'. I agree absolutely with Heidegger that it is a kind of *destiny of modernity* to forget to ask what is 'being'. And to ask that is not easy. So, to ask what is 'being' is the same as being human.

N: So, 'being' in your definition is to ask what it is — *to be*? It is the search for the truth…

D: Not exactly. I think that asking this question seriously is a kind of precondition of existence. So, to exist humanly is to ask this question. But that is not an answer to this question. So, I didn't answer this question.

N: Yes, I thought you didn't.

D: So, I could not say that 'being' is the same as asking what is 'being', no, not at all. I only pointed out that asking this question is essential for being human. More than that, any human person that doesn't ask himself about 'being', is not human enough, he's *semi-human*, almost human, *would-be human*. It is the same as a philosopher. Philosophers are human. And so likewise, a human is a philosopher as well. And if you are not a philosopher, you are not fully human. So, being a philosopher is the same as asking the question of 'being'.

N: Ok. But to you, what is the more important concept, 'Quid est?' or 'Id est?' I.e. 'What there is?' or 'That there is?' Another way to say this is, are you a little more Platonic or a little more Aristotelian? We see Raphael's famous painting in the Vatican, *The School of Athens*, where Aristotle points down to the earth and Plato points up to the heavens. Which are you?

D: I think that we need to realise absolutely that that is conventional wisdom that there are two approaches: the 'Immanence' of Aristotle and the 'Transcendence' of Plato. There is some truth in this distinction. But, if we consider more not the Latin, but the Greek texts of Aristotle, we will discover that this is not exactly so. And, as well being absolutely fascinated by Heidegger, I don't share with him his criticism of Plato.

And I have discovered the reason. Where is this philosophical moment where there is a kind of border of relevance of Heiddegerian criticism against Plato? It is the first hypothesis of Parmenides in the dialogue *Parmenides*, where there is a definition of the 'One'. And I have found lectures of Heidegger, the exact place where he explains to his students this element and he passes by precisely this first hypothesis without any serious explanation. But, this first hypothesis is the unification of immanentism and transcendentalism inside of Plato, so if we accept this apophatic concept of unity of Plato's Parmenides, the first hypothesis of this dialogue of Plato, so we could not accept all the immanentistic existential criticism of Plato by Heidegger. So, a little bit different but in the same vein, I consider the relations between Aristotle and Plato: I don't think that they are contradictory. I think that they belong to two aspects of Logos[1] . So, there is a purely Apollonian tradition in Plato, it is called Apollonian Logos. It is the greatest manifestation of the mind of Apollo. And there is Apollonian Dionysianism at the same time — this is Artistotle's vision of reality. But, Aristotle should be read in Greek, that is absolutely important, and without Latin commentators. So, Greek Aristotle combines two aspects: Apollonian logic and Dionysian physics, and that is very interesting. So, if logic is applicable to the metaphysical world of ideas but not to physical objects, that is not logic but rhetoric that should be applied because Aristotelian physics is not logical, it is rhetorical, and the second part of Aristotelian teaching is ignored. So, he is not only the author of logic but of rhetoric. And if mathematical objects or ideas or some concepts should be explored with the help of logic, the physical things the physical objects should be explored by the rhetoric. Rhetoric is a more strict, a more precise way to understand the nature of physical events and phenomenon. So, that is the grave error of modern thought to study the physical world with logic, because it is not logical; it is rhetorical. And the idea that the same object, the Aristotelian idea, that the same object has the same form and the matter so it should be united, and logically it is something unique: one. But, rhetorically there is form and matter: two. So how can one be two? It is not possible in logic, it is against the first, second and third laws of logic: identity, negation and exclusion. But within Aristotle there is the concept that there is two in one: i.e. matter and form are the same. So, it is not logical and in order to understand what it is, what is going on in that shift, that transition, we need to apply rhetoric because in all the tropes, in all the forms of the figure of rhetoric there is precisely this game with a rather illogical concept and that is the declination of logical laws. So, I think we need to revise our understanding of Plato and Aristotle. We need to accentuate less the differences between them — of course there are differences — but much more the two perspectives. So we need to not understand them as exclusively one or the other, but we need to understand that there is a shift, a transformation and a change of perspective from one to the other, there is a Platonic perspective and there is Aristotelian perspective, they are not contradictory; they could be accepted both in

different fields. And I am sure it is the same for Heidegger because he was following the phenomenological tradition, following Husserl and Brentano, and so he was very seriously affected in a positive way by Aristotle. So, that kind phenomenology is based on a reconsideration and revision of Aristotelian thought and trying to maybe clarify some points that were maybe not clear in Aristotle. But Heideggerian studies on Aristotle are brilliant, absolutely genius. So, it is a new aspect, a new understanding of Aristotle that is precisely the most important semantical axis of phenomenology as well as in Heideggerian phenomenology. So, I think we need to think more about the original sense and meaning of Aristotelian teaching, for example by paying more attention to this difference between the logical perspective and physical perspective, and logic and rhetoric. As well, we need to concentrate on Plato, on the first hypothesis of Parmenides, which changes and destroys all the criticism from Nietzsche and Heidegger against Plato. So, I understand very well why for Heidegger it was not necessary to delve into this first hypothesis because with that it was very difficult to ground his own doctrine, so for his own teaching it was useful. But now having already designed philosophy and all the development of Heideggerian thought, we could come back and reconcile Plato, Aristotle and existentialism. And that is precisely the same position that was Henry Corbin's position. I have discovered relations and an exchange of letters between Corbin and Heidegger. And I am a follower and great fan of Henry Corbin and his studies of Islamic philosophy. And Corbin was a Platonist and Heideggerian and that is exactly like me. I am fully Platonist, fully Aristotelian, and fully Heideggerian and I don't see a contradiction in this, and I could explain why.

N: Yes, traditionally Aristotle was considered to be the father of empiricism and materialism, while Plato was the father of Christianity and the idea of perfect forms, and the search for the eternal: so there was that contradiction between the two. But then Thomas Aquinas came along and tried to marry the two approaches. You are quite similar to Aquinas then in that respect, aren't you?

D: Not exactly, but I don't think that Aristotle was empirical, not at all. There are three Logoi, that is the main idea in my twenty-one volume work *Noomakhia*, so I am exploring all existing cultures through the lens of the three Logoi. So, Plato absolutely represents the Apollonian Logos. There is Dionysian Logos that is partly presented in Aristotle, it is a kind of non-materialistic immanentism but not empiricism, i.e. the experience is not more important in Aristotle, so I would say Aristotle unites the Logos of Apollo and the Logos of Dionysus. And there is the third Logos, which I call the Logos of Cybele, the Logos of the Great Mother. This time which is purely catacthonic[2], materialistic, we could call it feminist Logos that is empiricist, that is materialist and that is based on materialistic immanentism. So there is a kind of idea of the third Logos, the Logos of Cybele (atomism for example demonstrates it), that is based on the idea that something grows from nothing or from the substance so there is a kind of immanent

materialistic substance or nature that may grow everything and that proceeds from below to the top, that is the Mother Earth concept of the fuses. But, it is not the grain but the earth herself that bares all things, that has borne everything in the world. And that is the basic aspect of empiricism. So, you experience what the Great Mother Earth has created and you could interpret it and understand it because you are as well the product of this Great Mother Earth. So it is like Spinoza's thought or Lenin's thought on materialism and its magical aspect that includes scientific materialism. So, we are living not according to the Platonic and Aristotelian vision, but we have broken the tradition of Aristotle and Plato by entering into modernity. And modernity is the Logos of Cybele as the prevailing Logos. So empiricism is not Aristotelian, it is a kind of Cybelian reading of Aristotle. So, we are fully under the influence of this third Logos, and being fully under the influence of the third Cybelian Logos we interpret Plato and Aristotle not as they should be interpreted in their own position, in their own Aristotelian and Platonic worlds, but we are trying to interpret them in the catacthonic, Cybelian, materialistic, feminist world already. I think that feminism is not a modern phenomenon, it is a very, very ancient phenomenon. So feminism precedes as matriarchate precedes patriarchate and that is the great return. So this return to a Cybelian Logos is happening in modernity. So, modernity is older than the Middle Ages or antiquity. So, what was really modern and new was the Indo-European patriachy, and the Logos of Apollo and Dionysus. But, the concept of the Great Mother is very, very old. And so-called modernity or enlightenment, it is a return to these catacthonic roots of philosophy, it is Cybelian Logos that is prevailing now and it doesn't let us see the real Plato or real Aristotle or real Apollo or Dionysus. And I think as well this is why we have entered into the era of dechristianisation because the essence of Christianity is based on Plato and Aristotle. The Logos of Cybele is completely strange for Christian metaphysics; it has nothing to do with Christianity. But the Logos of Apollo and the Logos of Dionysus are both present inside of Christian metaphysics. The concept of two natures in Christ is Aristotelian and the concept of creation, the concept of the transcendence of God is Platonic.

N: That's an interesting point. So, you are saying that we are now living in the age of Cybele. In your view, is that a bad thing? Would you prefer that we return to the age of Christian harmony between Aristotle and Plato?

D: I don't think that in philosophy there are bad or good things, there are differences. And I am, if you prefer, a perspectivist, so I believe that there is not only one world, but the world depends on your perspective. So, there is the Platonic world, the world of Apollo; and there is the Dionysian world, the world of Dionysus. It is not only the mentality or Dionysian interpretation of something that exists independently, I don't think that. I think that the Dionysian world is the other pole of the Dionysian mind. So, the Dionysian mind could exist only in the Dionysian world. And the Apollonian mind,

consciousness or philosophy or thought could exist only in the Apollonian world. The same for Cybele, so the Cybelian mind exists only in the Cybelian world. That is not good. So, there is a kind of contradiction, and the conflict and the war between these three minds and worlds is what I call *Noomakhia*, the fight of the minds, the war of the thoughts, of the Logoi of the *nouses*[3] , of the types of mentality. But, I could not say that this is good or bad. So, we are living under the influence of Cybele, that is a fact. Some people could enjoy it and be happy. Some could protest it because they belong to a different Logos and to a different world. I belong to the Indo-European world of Apollo and Dionysus and I am fighting on their side, because it is my Logos, my world, my Fatherland. I belong to Plato and Aristotle, to Christianity, to the Indo-European hierarchical, patriarchical solar tradition. But, fighting against something doesn't mean that it is bad. We are fighting because we belong to some identity, an identity is obliged to fight against the other one in order to define itself. And so if I am fighting against the Logos of Cybele it doesn't mean that this Logos is bad or evil. It is my fight, the fight of my ancestors, the Christian fight against the Antichrist. But, there is the other perspective, the other world that is the Cybelian world, created by the Cybelian mind or the Cybelian mind is reflecting the Cybelian world — perhaps it is vice-versa, but it is all the same. In perspectivism there is nothing that is preceding, the world precedes mentality at the same time as mentality or the mind precedes reality. So, both reality and mind are in correlation. And both poles of correlation are defined paradigmatically by this or that Logos, I would say. But, to fight against the vision of the Great Mother is not the same as to recognise it to be evil. So, it is not my world, it is oppressive, it is totalitarian (maybe just as many other Logoi are), but it is against the dominance of this Logos that we are fighting. And I think that kind of perspectivism in the sense of Logos is already our victory. If we could, for example, avoid the dominance of a materialist understanding of reality that could exist or correlate with a rationalist materialistic mind or without it, as materialists pretend, if we could avoid this uni-naturality of reality and come to perspectivism and to some relativistic understanding of the world, i.e. there is not only one world that we are living in, but three parallel worlds. So, all three are included in humanity in its thought and its philosophy. So, that will be already in the totalitarian time of the domination of this Cybelian materialistic kingdom which we are fighting against. But, if we could insist, if we could defend this possibility, only the possibility of the alternative, that would be already a victory. For example, I belong to the Middle Ages, the Middle Ages are my time, I am living in the Middle Ages. So, I think that time is not something universal. We could belong to the Middle Ages and be in modernity; we could be in modernity and live in the Middle Ages. So, time is the consequence of logic, there is not only one time, there are three times: Apollonian time which is eternity, Dionysian time which is cyclical, and there is Cybelian time which is progressive, linear, irreversible time. But, this kind of hypnosis of the Great Mother is a

kind of black magic I would say. So, there is no such kind of time as universal, linear time; that is a concept which is imposed on us. So, I think that time is a kind of function of the Logos. It is not something that exists before Logos and defines it, so for me I believe in eternity more than in reality. For me eternity is a kind of object of experience, of the inner experience, of the external experience and I could not accept that something could exist without eternity. So, eternity for me is a kind of positive dimension of the present; not something that was before the beginning or will follow the end of the time. Eternity exists before time, after time and in time, because time is a reflection of eternity. I am repeating Plato's words. So, it is not evil, it is different and it is as well, I would say, optional. So, to belong to this modern world and to share its prejudices with our humanity is an option; it is not fate or destiny. We could live inside of Cybele's world and not belong to it internally. This is the case for the last believers of the Apollonian and Dionysian Logoi. It is not our time, we are strangers here, but we still continue to fight against what we think is wrong, wrong in our understanding. But we recognise that there is a Cybelian humanity, the children of darkness, who enjoy what is going on now. And there are the children of light who deplore that whip, who cry in such conditions. For us it is the dark ages, but for the titans there is enlightenment, there is the full light and a kind of dawn of immanence and materialism. They are happy but we are not.

N: Ahh, you have just anticipated one of my questions about time and faith. How do you actualise these conceptions of 'being' and time? For example, it seems to me that you are clearly a man of faith, so how do you reconcile living a petty bourgeoisie life with a very strong faith? Isn't there some sort of inherent contradiction in this?

D: Yes absolutely, but it is not a contradiction; it is suffering. There are many kinds of suffering. The suffering I am speaking about is to be in the world but not to belong to this world. So, I feel alienated from myself, not from the other. I could not say, for example, I am such a Christian man belonging to traditional world, but living in a world that has lost its tradition that is anti-Christian, not Christian, post-Christian and not traditional. So, I am a modern post-Christian man. But, I am in opposition to myself, to my individuality, to my way of life, to my personality. So I am against myself, I am not against the other, I am against myself, and that is the deep split inside my own personality. So, that is the suffering, that is why I suffer. So, I am suffering not from the other, from something exterior; I am suffering because I am modern, because I was born in the Soviet Union by atheist and communist parents, because I was educated in the completely wrong Cybelian materialistic communist system, and because I am obliged now to live in liberalism or nationalism; for me they are the same. The three political ideologies (nationalism, communism, liberalism) are the same in essence, i.e. they belong to the paradigm of Cybele. I am against them all, but there is no other position, there is no fourth position. So, I am obliged to be and to live in a concentration camp of

my own personality, a concentration camp which is not from the other; no, it is something that we are for our own self, for our own soul. So, and that is suffering. So that could be a Gulag or that could be a modern totalitarian liberal concentration camp with political correctness, with all these oppressive epistemologies, what we should be and what we shouldn't be. So, there are three types of totalitarianism, and in all of them — in communism, in liberalism, in nationalism — I feel that I am an absolute stranger because I don't belong to it. And that is not a contradiction. I am not pretending to be what I want to be or what I want to become. I would defend this traditionalist Christian identity not against the other, but against myself because that is the inner problem. So, I am obliged to be part of this society, of this time, but I am against it. And I am against not the other, but against myself.

N: So, Dante had this perhaps very similar conundrum to you, i.e. of the soul being divided between the philosophical end and the spiritual end or the theological end. You have this sense of duality as well, don't you?

D: I think that philosophy, theology and, as well, maybe, emotions are the same, they are all Apollonian/Dionysian. So, the dualism is different for me. I think that not the body, but a part of the human being that we could call sociality is changing. Sociality could be Apollonian in the traditional society, Dionysian or Cybelian. And we are living in the Cybelian type of society. So, now the social paradigm is based on the catacthonic, materialistic, oppressive vision of things. So, a kind of materialism that is not a kind of ideological materialism, but everyday materialism, materialism as a kind of practice, not ideology. That is common for nationalism, communism and liberalism. All three modern political theories are essentially materialistic pretending to be everything, but they are materialistic in the acceptance of gravity, of the scientific picture of world and so on, on the basis of materialistic principles. So, I think that the soul and the spirit of a person could not be explained if we recognise their autonomy and authenticity. They could not be functions of this materialistically comprehended matter. And as well the body is not material, the body is first of all spiritual. So, in the Platonic theory there is the spirit that creates the soul, and the soul that creates the body. So, the spirit finally, the spirit creates the body. So, we need to go back to make the body more and more psychic and I would say permitted by the forces…powers of the soul. And we need to make ourselves more and more spiritual. So, that is a kind of elevation process that is human destiny in the Apollonian and Dionysian sense. We need to repeat creation in the opposite way. So, we were created up to the body, up to the material level. And we need to be de-created, to return to our origin, our source. And this source is the centre of our spirit. So, I think that sociality could help with this process, or it could be an obstacle for it. Traditional sociality with castes, with hierarchy, with sacred values helps us to make this return. And modern sociality prevents us from doing this, because it tries to have a grip over our body, and to

materialise our body and to corporify our soul and to make our spirit more and more emotional. That is the other way it is a kind of gravitation not only in the bodily sense, gravitation of the soul, gravitation of the spirit. And that is a kind of corporification of this spiritual essence in order to sacrifice us to the Great Mother. It is a kind of castration of the spirit. The reason for this is to take this essence of human that is not from this world and to put it inside of the earth, and as well to feed the Great Mother with the blood of our spirits. That is the sociality we are living in, that is the totalitarian nature of modernity. So, I think that in that sense dualism is not between the soul or the spirit, or the soul, spirit and body. Dualism is between human nature and sociality. And so what is interesting is that materialists and progressivists affirm that traditional society was not only hell, but it was as well a kind of creative paradigm of this Apollonian vision of human nature. And now that is the check. We are living in the reality check. If we could affirm and prove that the vertical and spiritual construction of the human soul and human being is not a consequence of sociality and is a kind of inner nature of man which is flourishing in the traditional society and suffering in the post-traditional, catacthonic, materialistic society, if we could prove that there is a subject of suffering inside of the opposite sociality, we will prove that there is something more than sociality — there is a Man. So, now it is a kind of reality check for the Dignity of the Man. If in men there is only sociality that could define a traditional type of society or modern type of society, a spiritual type of man or society and materialistic man or type of society, so man will be lost and that will be the time of *dehumanisation.* And I think that artificial intelligence is a very good metaphor of this, if artificial intelligence could exist, man was a failure, he was only sociality. So, we have sociality in the one situation, and we now as well have only sociality. There is no man below sociality, so sociality defines everything. I agree that it defines everything, almost everything, but there is something below sociality which is not the individual because the individual as well is the product, the function of sociality. And I think that is the great fight of the autonomous nature of man. So the fight for the dignity of the spirit, of the soul and a kind of autonomy of the soul. What is the problem? The problem is the question of physical eschatology. If we could pass to artificial intelligence, so everything is sociality. But if there will be some resistance, some rebellion, some uprising of the spirit against that, I am calling this the *Radical Subject* that is below sociality, then the fate of humanity will be different. So, we are engaged in the last eschatological, philosophical battle. Maybe history has ended, but the fight for the meaning of the end of history is still open.

N: And on that note, what to you is the ultimate purpose of life?

D: I think that the purpose of life is death. It is not the end of the life, the border of life, it is the purpose. So, we are living for death, we are living in front of death, we are living in order to die and that is the telos, the goal. Not coincidence, not something casual or some fatal reaching the border; no, it is ethical value: death. Death is the

centre of life. So life is a circle around death. And it is not only approaching death, but it is a kind of run from death, run away from death. So, we are running from death in order to fall into death. But both aspects are completely wrong. We should live with death, for death, in front of death, face to face with death. And that is life, that is the purpose of life, not to die, to live to the death is not to die. And it is the only way that death does not become something that is coming from outside. So, death is not from outside, death is our innermost essence. So we are living in death and we are living death. And to recognise ourselves to be living death now before death, it is the only way to gain the real essence of the spirit, of the soul and being. So, being is hidden inside of our inner death, not as the end of some external existence, of some objective material. But we are a kind of people pretending to be living people, and recognising the reality of our existence is recognising our death. Inside, deep inside of this death, in the centre of death lives immortality, eternity and truth and being. But, we could not reach being by life, so we need to go through life to death, inside of death to find being.

N: So, what value do you put on life then? And in your view, is it ever right to take life?

D: I think that if the purpose of the life is death, so there is not such a big problem to take away life. But we could not kill the other because death is something that belongs only to you and to God. So, if we understand what is the death that we are bearing in ourselves: if someone kills the other he is under the illusion that one person kills the other, that is, the person who dies has died. And no one can alienate the death from us, so nobody can kill us. We are absolutely immune because when we are dying that is our will to die. Maybe it is our will against our understanding, it is our hidden will. So, it is also in the terms of theology, only God could kill us. If someone kills us, it is God who has permitted and ordered that finally. And in the personalistic vision, it is ourselves that have sanctioned the killing. So, I think that the idea that somebody could kill the other is luciferian pride, there is nothing like that.

N: So, there is no murder? Murder doesn't exist then?

D: No, there is no murder. We could not kill ourselves because we are already dead. And there is eternity. What is really important to us is eternal being and all the rest is kind of contingent, and being contingent it could exist or… what could not exist, doesn't exist. Only that which could not exist, exists. It is a kind of Apollonian and Platonic logic, that is Christian as well. So, the body and material life is very narrow, only the small, smallest part of our life. And to be killed by the enemies of God is the easiest way to reaffirm our eternity and immortality. So, it is not only radical, fanatical belief, it is normal for religious understanding, because when believers say that they believe that the soul exists after death, it is not only words; they believe that they are creating the world based on these values. So, death or killing is not so important as materialists and immanentists pretend. For if you have only this life, this material life, you will strive for

immortality, for material, bodily immortality. That is the modern quest for the post-humanism of artificial intelligence. It is a kind of hysterical search to avoid death.

N: I have a book here by Hieronymus Bosch, the great 15th-century painter. And he has some very famous paintings of death, the afterlife and the Last Judgement. I wonder what your thoughts on these pictures are. Do you agree with his conceptions of heaven, hell and the Last Judgement?

D: Yes, absolutely. We could imagine hell, we could imagine paradise, we could imagine the world beyond physical death, but it is not so important how it will look like. I like Hieronymus Bosch very much because he in a way is a perspectivist. So, we are used to living in only one world, but Bosch and others are witnesses that there are other worlds as well. Poets and artists describe and make pictures of the other perspectives, the other world that coexists as well with our own world, and this multiplicity of worlds is very impressive. And maybe you could say that Bosch is a fantasist, but our understanding of reality is as well a fantasy. So, we imagine different worlds but our everyday imagination is rather poor. We imagine banal things. And when we try to free our fantasy we perceive the other aspect of reality, not the inner or exterior reality as such because reality is a counterpart for the observer. So, I think that as an anthropological and physical teacher Bosch is very important. He helps us to have a richer and broader understanding of existence. So, I don't think that we need to strongly oppose, for example, hell or paradise or our life. We need to put our earthly existence in a multi-dimensional perspective, e.g. co-existing with paradise. Paradise is not only something for the future or for the saints or holy men; no, it exists now as well. What is going on now in the spiritual aspect of reality is paradise, which is always above us, not only after or before, it is now — paradise is now. It is a kind of vision of what is going on in the world of high spirits. And the hell of Bosch is as well, I think, inside what is going on in the lower aspects of reality. There is a kind of correct mapping of the ontology and existence of hell and heaven, which was an everyday experience for men of tradition, so there is nothing exceptional in that. So, people living in the traditional world were dealing with some entities, maybe angels, devils or demons, and that is also the same for example in Mount Athos. So, the pictures of Bosch are not only an important part of art history, but a part of the daily life of monks in Mount Athos. They are living inside of this reality, they are fighting against demons by night, and they could from time to time receive a kind of vision of grace, of paradise and of heaven. And that is their perspective. So in traditional society, hell and heaven are two dimensions of the everyday life experience of man, that is nothing exceptional. So, if we will be open to all the dimensions of our own being we would perceive hell in ourselves and around us. It is so easy in our modernity, it is enough to switch on the TV or look out of the window and we will perceive something out of Bosch immediately, for example a feminist or gay pride parade. They are almost the same. Here in Bosch I

recognise Madonna, Hilary Clinton, there is Obama, this black guy from hell, Soros and his network protesting against Putin or Brexit or Trump, everybody is here. So it is a kind of realism not of the future, but of now because a Soros character always existed. The kind of landscape, the part of this hellish landscape, we could recognise it very easily. It is not a political caricature, this is nothing to do with politics. There are some types, some archetypes from hell, and there are some archetypes from heaven. They co-exist in our human life. Our human life now is the lower part of Bosch's pictures. But, we could discover in ourselves, in the depths of our culture, tradition and as well as in religious experience, and our fantasy the other aspects i.e. heaven. But it is very difficult now, someone has remarked that the chapters on hell in Dante are read much more often than those on heaven, heaven is boring for us. So the reader prefers Dante's hell and the spectators of Bosch's hellish images are much more numerous. So, the majority of people recognise something very, very familiar in these pictures or in Dante's hell. And Bosch's pictures of heaven are far less interesting and inspiring, and therefore much less regarded or seen.

N: How do you personally imagine heaven or hell to be? And which are you more attracted to — heaven or hell?

D: I am absolutely sure that heaven could not exist without hell and hell without heaven. I think that we have a correct understanding of hell, and an incorrect understanding of heaven. So, for us heaven is boring and secure. Heaven is not boring, it is not secure: it is dangerous. So, for example when a saint is walking in the sky he can fall, and the moment when he feels himself secure and bored by praising the Lord he will fall immediately. So this is very dangerous to walk through the sky. In order to walk through the sky in heaven you need to fly, and to fly you should have spiritual innocence and be excited by the praise of the Lord and not only do so out of obligation. So, I think that we could not choose between heaven and hell, it is God that will choose the proper place for us. And the place he will choose for us, will be the right one. So, if we belong to hell, so what to do, so it is our doom, we are doomed. If we belong to heaven it is so great a gift that we could not hope for it because if this gift is given it is only out of pure grace. So, we could not deserve heaven, the only thing we could really deserve is hell. So…

N: There is purgatory as well though, isn't there?

D: Not in the Orthodox Church, we do not believe in Purgatory. So we think that only God could grant us heaven, but by our own human means we could get only into hell. Without the grace of the God we could not be saved, so we could not deserve heaven, heaven is a gift always, we could deserve only hell. And we hope, humbly, to receive this gift but we think that we have no dignity, that we could not deserve this. It is impossible for a human being to deserve this, only maybe for the saints, but not for ordinary human beings. But I think that we need to consider much more than just the

judgement of where we will be, it is much more important to consider the question of the sheer existence of heaven and hell. The question is not a moral but an ontological one: heaven exists and hell exists, they exist now, before and will exist after. So, when we take into consideration the existence of hell and heaven we discover the other dimension of our life. There is a hellish aspect of our life, there is hell now and there is as well what could be a heavenly dimension. When I visited Jerusalem or Mount Athos or some monasteries or when I am going to the liturgy I feel myself not in heaven but having the possibility to look at it, to spot it, to have a momentary sight of it. So, I could feel it not as something close but as something distant but still existing. It is this kind of horizon, upper horizon. And when I look around myself, I am almost certain that I am in hell. So, what is going on in the present world not only in the Western civilisation but in other countries as well, we are not an exception, it looks like hell. So, it takes less effort to imagine hell. We need to look around us and it is here. But recognising these two dimensions, believing in heaven and hell, it is a broadening of our understanding of the ontology of reality. So, that is not only a metaphor, it is perspectivism. So, we could consider a heavenly perspective as purely Apollonian, it is idealistic, we are dealing with ideas, the archetypes. Normal life in the middle between hell and heaven is Dionysian, it is something Apollonian, and something hellish inside. And there is pure hell — it is modernity, it is the Cybelian world, it is precisely Mother Earth as Mother Hell.

N: But when the final trumpet blows at the Second Coming and the Last Judgement is made, where do you think you will go?

D: I don't know, I have no idea. I will fight for the last moment, but I could not say. Peter, who was the chosen one, thrice betrayed Christ. How could we hope to fight to the end, to be loyal to our faith? It is too satanic to think that we could be absolutely sure and secure that we will stay until the end, that we will not be obliged to fall. So, I have no idea. When the Second Coming will happen, I hope to be in the right place, but I don't know what place will be the right one. It is up to God to choose my place. He sees the truth, he knows our hearts, he knows ourselves much better than we do. So it should be his will and his judgement, I could not pretend to make this judgement for him. I will do my best. I am absolutely sure that without his help and his gift I could not deserve salvation, for me it is impossible.

N: In your view is man naturally evil or naturally good?

D: I think he is naturally free. So, he is not good or bad, but free to choose what to be, what perspective to take and what Logos to accept. So, I strongly believe in the absolute freedom of man. When I say absolute, I mean absolute. So, man is obliged to do many things by different circumstances and conditions, but in the inner most essence of his being he is free. So, he could be obliged to do something physically, but nothing can ever take hold of the depth of his human nature. We are created essentially free. So, we

make absolutely free choices. But, we are not free from the consequence of the choice because if we choose something after that, then we are obliged to follow that. But in making the choice, the essential choice (the 'Entscheidung' in German), we are free. And nobody can oblige us to make this choice because this choice is existential, and consists in choosing to exist authentically and to be ourselves, or not to be ourselves and to exist inauthentically. The ideology of modernity is pure inauthentic being, but it is not only imposed upon us, it is also chosen by us. So imposed and chosen, if we choose not to accept it, no one can impose it on us. So, I think that freedom is the definition of human nature. And I think that good and evil are very secondary for this freedom. This freedom is much more… the choice is not between good and evil, the choice is deeper.

N: But for you, what is the Greatest Good? What defines the Greatest Good?

D: First of all, I have a Platonic understanding of what is Good. I think that the Platonic Good (αγαθός) is apophatic, so we never know what is Good, Good is an open question. This negative understanding of good is the only way to treat it properly because for Plato Good is above being. Good is something that is the same as 'the One'. To be 'One' and to be Good and to be God is the same. So the Good is not given, is not attainable: it is open. So, we could search for the Good, but we could not find it. It is always a process, but it is a spiritual and vertical process. So, the Good could be manifested in the search for the good. So, if we try to define Good and say what is Good, we limit the Good. We make it something limited and defined and that contradicts the very essence of the Platonic understanding of Good. This apophatic nature of Good was lost in some kind of deviated Platonism. And that is also why his idea that 'being' is considered to be something, a kind of object of second nature, i.e. there are physical objects and there are kinds of ideas, as well as metaphysical objects. So, there is nothing like that in Plato, and the Good, what is Good, is the same as 'the One'. And 'the One' has no being, it is a kind of abyss, an ungrounded ground, a ground without ground. And to strive for the Good is to strive for the apophatic aspect of transcendence. So, we do not know, we could not know what is Good. We should go in this direction and the direction is clear…

N: Which direction is that then?

D: I think the direction is a kind of unity. In Plato there is the concept of Henosis (ἕνωσις). So I think that what is Henosistic is good, it has some relation to 'the One'. But 'the One' is something that transcends being. So, this direction towards pure transcendency, not reaching that or attaining that, as it is impossible. So, that kind of unification is Good. *It is not unity, but unification*. This henosistic aspect of things is good. What unites things, not with each other, but with its origins. So, following this line towards the source is good.

N: What about divine revelation and the goodness of faith, hope and charity? Are these not the Greatest Good or at least good?

D: These are secondary goods. So, what is proceeding from this hidden 'One' or apophatic 'One' is Good. But, it is much more important what is *going towards* this hidden 'One'. So, any kind of revelation is not Good in itself, it is *an invitation* to the Good. A kind of creation is made not for things to exist, but for us to return to the uncreated Unity. So, there is a kind of quest and test as well and proof, reality's proof. And to consider reality as something good in itself is completely wrong. It is bad to consider reality as Good. Good is some pre-reality, some super-reality. It is a kind of goal, a telos. So, Good is not given and Good cannot be given, we need to strive for it. And if for example there is grace on the one hand, receiving this grace is not, for example, to receive an apple and to eat it. No, to receive something properly is to *give it back*. If we receive a gift it is only proper to give back the gift. If we receive something, for example existence, we need to sacrifice that to the giver because it is not something that is given to us as private ownership. It is given to us as a test and proof. If we receive that only with a 'thank you' and so on, we are failing in this test. We need to immediately give it back. We are receiving the gift only to give it back and to give everything back because we are receiving life, we are receiving law, we are receiving revelation from God in order to give it all back to him. So, I don't think that all these ideas of conservation, of helping to exist more and more are right. We need to return, to change this direction. Creation ends in us, and continuing that is not a good thing at all. So, we (i.e. human beings) are the eschatology of creation and the return should come precisely at the point where we are. So, we are the ending point of the creation, but also the starting point of the return. It is *prohodos* and *epistrophe* in the Neo-Platonic understanding. So the Good is not given to us to keep, no. If we have kept it for more than one second we are lost. We should immediately start to go there, from where this gift proceeds. So, the Good is not constancy, it is not, for example, a kind of care for the other. *We should care about the return*. And the only real care of man should be the care of the return. And we need to take with us everybody we love, everybody we care about. But only the return to the pre-ontological abyss is good. So, it is a completely different way than to continue to conserve reality. No, reality and the world is not a value in itself. So, if it will be destroyed at the end of time it will be destroyed, and this is no great loss because it will be destroyed by the Creator who is much more important than the creature he created.

N: So, are you saying that our charitable actions, our faith and hope are secondary, they don't really matter in terms of the greater picture?

D: If they will facilitate our return to God, they are good. But, if they only preserve what already exists, it is bad. I think that now the Catholic Church with its Jesuit Pope is completely a simulacrum of the reality of the faith. Now he is caring about poor people, but he is trying to comfort them here in their human life. There is no afterlife for…

N: But, didn't Christ say, 'Clothe the naked and feed the hungry'?

D: But, not for the hungry to live a normal life. He said that for a purpose, and the purpose was the Return and the purpose was Salvation, and the purpose of death is to resurrect. And not to eat, to live, to have clothes, no. If you take a meal away from the poor and starving in order to make them Return, it is better than to feed them. Terrestrial, earthly life is not the value, the Return is the value in the pure Christian understanding. And it is a betrayal of the Christian faith to concentrate on the material aspects and needs. For example, the people who are ill. The illness is given by God in order to Return and…

N: But can't the healing also be given by God?

D: God's healing is done in order to make or facilitate the Return. And not to heal…

N: But, he gave us life?

D: Health and life are not values. Death is a value. Death and Resurrection are values. Eternal life is a value. Terrestrial life is not a value.

N: But why did God give us life then, if it is not a value?

D: In order for us to give it back as I have already explained. We receive life in order to die, and not to take it, seize it and continue with it, no. We are invited to live in order to give back our life to the Giver of life. And that is the only reason to exist. Any other reason to exist, for example to care about other human beings or to procreate others, is false and completely wrong. And finally when we forget the most important reason of life which is death, and mistake the gift of life for the necessary continuance of life, after that we are already inside of post-humanism. We try to avoid death by artificial immortality, we try to avoid the suffering of the mind by artificial intelligence and so on. We are already inside post-humanism. So, post-humanism is not a 20th-century problem and challenge; it appeared at the beginning of modernity. When, as Nietzsche said, we have killed God, we are already there. We care only about these tangential things. We try to cure ill people in order for them to be here, and not for them to return. We have forgotten the Return; for us it is a metaphor, a moral metaphor. We don't believe in Eternity; we are completely inside of this Cybelian world. And in a Cybelian world health, eating, consuming, satisfaction, joy, happiness — all these immanent aspects have value in themselves.

N: But how should we live then? What are you supposed to do in life?

D: Firstly, we need to get rid of these Cybelian values. We need to destroy them absolutely. So, we need to destroy all these kinds of concerns and cares. So, what we care about now and what has importance for us now is of no importance whatsoever, for example, to the monk in Mount Athos. I think that the Earth should be like Mount Athos. So, everybody should care about God, the soul, life, love, but not about what we care about now.

N: In what way should we care about God, the soul, life, love? Surely it is through the teaching of faith, hope and charity?

D: We should distribute not goods, but rather invitations to return. We need to restore human dignity, and not help people feel more comfortable. I think that comfort is not the highest value; indeed it is not a value at all. If you feel comfortable it's bad, you are less human. You are more like a fish or a parrot. To suffer is human, suffering is human. Comfort is not human, it is a dehumanising aspect of reality. We should live an ascetic life. We should suffer and we should be rather ill and saved, rather than healthy and damned. And I think that to be rich is almost to be damned, and to be poor is almost to be saved, not always but almost always. An important example is the biblical story of the rich man who could not follow Christ because of his wealth. If you feel comfortable, if you feel good, if you are fat, if you are healthy, you are far from Christ, from the source, from your own self, and you are damned. Suffering, starving and being poor are holy. So, I think that as Francis of Assisi, following the apostles, affirmed, real richness is misery, misery is the ultimate richness. So I would say to be ill is to be healthy, the absence of material well-being is the real well-being, and the absence of comfort is the real spiritual comfort. So, these are the real values, the real Good. But today in this world these ideas sound crazy, or stupid or anti-humanist but they are absolutely humanist in their essence, that is, if we are following the other Logos, other than the one prevailing now.

Thus ends our first formal interview. Our next series of discussions were more informal walking and talking affairs and occurred shortly after this. Alexander was first of all keen to talk of politics.

D: …Putin will of course win the next election. Everyone is already tired of him, most dangerously his supporters. So, the next six years will be terrible, it will be the decline, the collapse of Putin's system because it will prove itself to be unsupportable, unreliable I would say. So, he has answered personally all the historical challenges he had except one: he could not create the future, so there is no future. So, he has solved the problems of the present, but he has consciously closed any relation to the future. He has no time left because if during the 2017/18 years he didn't do anything, it is clear that six years is not enough. He is already a mature politician and man; he is defined already; he could not change; he will be the same, and that is the catastrophe. Ten years ago he was a kind of success and the salvation of Russia. But now it is a catastrophe: the same people, the same men, doing the same things. He didn't change; he is the same. This was absolutely, completely good in the beginning, doubtful in the middle and it is catastrophic at the end…

Shortly afterwards our attention turns to lighter matters as a curious creature in a cage appears in front of us…

N: Alexander, what is your opinion of parrots?

D: … this guy (*pointing to the parrot*) is very serious, he has character, and is indeed much more human than most humans.

N: So, you are a fan of birds; you like animals, do you?

D: Not so much, because to love them people normally consider animals as something that is below them and they love them as if they have a kind of gift, grace for them. I think animals have their own worlds, they are living in a parallel universe. And to love them or hate them or hunt them or respect them — it's completely wrong and shows no respect for their differences. So we need to find another way to treat them, not so directly to love, or hate, or defend them. I think we should recognise their dignity, their right to be different, and their right to live in their own worlds.

N: Do you have any animals yourself?

D: No.

N: No cats, no dogs, nothing?

D: No, because I think, as Gilles Deleuze thought, that to have domestic animals is a kind of perversion. We should not diminish the difference and the distance between us and them. They should be left alone. For example, I strongly disapprove of seeing dogs because they were wolves once, and they have betrayed their nature. For me, it is very sad to see a dog. I think that they should be different to men, they should be returned to being wolves. I think that wolves have dignity, but dogs no. And I don't appreciate the betrayal of nature in favour of man. Man is not so important as to betray your nature. So, they should be as this guy (*pointing to the parrot*) here very, very proud and autonomous…

N: And we have the mirror here, the mirror has always been historically and philosophically symbolic.

D: Absolutely

N: What does the mirror mean to you?

D: The mirror is very dangerous I would say.

N: Dangerous?

D: Yes, because it conjures up a kind of black doppelgänger (Schwarze Doppelgänger, Black Double)…

N: Who is standing there? Is that really you standing there?

D: No, no, absolutely not, it is something other. Maybe I don't know him because…

N: Do you see your soul there?

D: I have another conception of myself.

N: Is that what you really look like?

D: It is a kind of caricature I would say.

N: So, you don't spend a lot of time in mirrors? You don't like them?

D: No, I think they try to mock me.

That day was Pancake Tuesday so we enjoyed a brief pancake interlude, which helped inspire our next conversation.

N: Shortly in the Orthodox Church you will have the Forgiveness Sunday Mass. What are your thoughts on forgiveness?

D: Forgiveness Sunday is when we all ask for forgiveness. It is necessary to enter into Lent because when a person remembers the evil he did to someone, it gives him an opportunity to ask forgiveness.

N: Would you say that forgiveness is an important part of your life?

D: It is difficult for me to forgive. I am too evil, too bad, but I try. Although, it is very, very difficult.

N: To forgive is divine, as they say.

D: Yes, yes, and I understand that it is very important.

N: So, you will make an effort this time for Lent? You will try and forgive?

D: I am trying to forgive. But for me sometimes a kind of hatred is natural, for example, when I see injustice or something like that, but I know this is bad. I confess it as a sin, but it is still so. I am trying to fight against it, but maybe I have not enough will to win that fight, but I try. And indifference can also play a role, for example if I forget someone or a bad deed, it is for me much easier to be indifferent than to forgive, but that is not the Christian way.

N: It takes time, forgiveness, doesn't it?

D: Yes, forgiveness…to pay back evil with good: it is Christian, it is very Christian, but it is difficult for me. I think I would say, as Nietzsche said, to recompense evil with good is too cruel. It is too cruel because it humiliates the other. So, if you, if someone does a bad thing against you and you return it by doing a bad thing to them, it is a kind of…

N: Quid pro quo.

D: Yes, but at the same time you are honouring the other evildoer, so he becomes comfortable with his wrongdoing. But if you are paying back evil with good, you are a saint. If you could return a good feeling against a bad thing done to you, that is a great cruelty. So, you show indifference, you show your immunity and the smallness of the other. So, he didn't hit you but you hit him. He tried to access you and finally he received something other — it is too cruel. So, I think maybe to give back a punch is more human, but less Christian, I agree.

A painting of a legendary Russian literary figure catches my eye and the conversation follows accordingly.

N: And what are your thoughts on Oblomov?

D: Oblomov is great: it is purely Russian, because Russians sacrifice practical sense for dreams. So, we are much more comfortable in dreams and in trying to imagine things. We are very devoted to imagination, much more than to reality. The imagination for Russians is very artistic. And I think Oblomov is purely Russian. So, it is not only about laziness, but a very intensive laziness.

N: A Russian laziness?

D: Yes, yes, because it is not opposition to work as such, it is opposition to being too much engaged in work. So, in the practical sense it is a kind of way of life as well. It was a traditional way of life in the past, to be very calm. Now, there is little of Oblomov's spirit.

N: Would you like to see more of Oblomov's spirit today?

D: There is a Christian Orthodox story. There was a very lazy monk. He was so lazy that he did absolutely nothing during his entire life: no work, no charity, but simply living in a monastery. And when he was near death, all the other monks around him were absolutely sure he would go to Hell because he did nothing, he was absolutely lazy. And when they came to say goodbye to him on his deathbed, he was joyfully smiling. And they asked him, 'Why are you smiling?' And he answered, 'An angel and a demon came to me in order to judge me. And the demon said: "He is mine because he didn't do any good things." But the angel responded that at the same time he didn't commit any sin, because he was too lazy, so he is mine.' So, he was too lazy to commit a sin, therefore he was saved. And this kind of lazy monk story is very typical for Russia.

Later that day we took a stroll through the bustling streets of Moscow where the freezing weather inspired our next conversation.

N: Do you have a favourite season, Alex? Do you like the cold?

D: No, I hate the cold.

N: Living in Russia must be tough then?

D: Yes, but I like much more Autumn and Spring. I don't like it too hot or too cold.

N: One season represents life and the other is death. You like the dualism between the two?

D: Yes, yes, these Dionysian periods. But, my idea is that Dionysus is the ally of Apollo, and not the opposite, as Nietzsche and traditional understanding affirm. I think, that the real opposition is between Cybele on the one hand and Dionysus and Apollo on the other hand. For example, Bachofen's idea of 'Das Mutterrecht'.

N: You are strongly influenced by German philosophers, aren't you?

D: Yes, I like them. I am inspired by German philosophy but also by Greek philosophy as well. And I have written a series of books called *Noomakhia,* which I have almost completed.

N: Will they be available in English?

D: I think so, yes. Now, I am going with my English friends to create a 'Noomakhia' fund in order to maybe help some organisations of the English establishment to promote these books. There are volumes dedicated to African civilisation, which could be of interest to African society, about China as well, but one volume is also dedicated to England.

N: Really?

D: And I didn't dare to call it 'English' Logos, because I didn't find such a thing…

N: Were you looking specifically for this Logos?

D: Yes, I have been looking for it, but I didn't find it. I gave it another name –'Britain or England?' Because I have remarked or discovered this kind of duality of two identities of British and English, i.e. German and Celts. The Brits were Celts and the English were Germans. So, that for me is fundamental, this idea of red and white dragons fighting, still fighting. Not only during the time of King Arthur or during the Stuart's dynasty but as well still fighting today, and I think that is the reason why English culture is highly divided inside. It is not purely German or purely Celtic, as France or Germany are. But it is also not mixed or balanced as in Switzerland; instead they are still fighting.

N: But now because of our imperial history we have not only the English, Irish, Welsh and Scottish, but also Indians, Africans and others. And you can see this new imperial identity most clearly in London.

D: Yes, that is a result of an imperialist past. But, I don't think that they have anything to do with the true English identity, they are additions, they are from outside. So, the real identity is developed inside of the English mind between the Celtic and Germanic elements. And they are still not harmonised. This happens from time to time. For example, there is a similar problem in Indian society, i.e. there is very hard inner position of Dravidian culture that is against the Aryan invaders who overcame absolutely the previous Dravidian identity, but this Dravidian identity is trying to reassert itself now. And so from time to time this struggle between identities takes centuries and thousands of years and still doesn't disappear. But what is interesting is that sometimes it immediately disappears, while other times it continues. I think that this Celtic level of English identity is still living, not only in the Irish, Scottish and Welsh, but also inside of the English.

N: Which will prevail do you think, the Germanic or Celtic identity? And, to my mind, we also have very strong historical links with France.

D: Yes, the Norman conquest gave serious support to this Celtic identity and at a certain time England and France were almost the same country with England possessing territories on the continent.

N: Indeed, not only during that period but in 1940, at the beginning of the Second World War, Churchill even proposed for England and France to be united into one country.

D: Yes, yes. So, it is a very constant idea. But we could not say who will win, because it is up to Englishmen themselves to decide and nobody could or should decide for them. In my vision, we should not impose our understanding (which might be friendly or not so friendly) on the others. So, I think that it is improper to give advice. It is absolutely an inner English problem, how to solve this dilemma of which dragon will prevail. Maybe you will follow the Swiss federalist solution and both identities will be very reconciled and harmonious. Personally, I think that would be best.

N: So, you propose a federalist solution for the UK?

D: Yes, for example as in Belgium, where you have the German-Flemish and the Walloons. But for this you need to recognise the other and for Germans it is very difficult to recognise the other, it is not a German idea. They think that to recognise the other is to submit.

N: But, we also have the influence of Rome in our history not only on our language but also in how the British Empire thought of itself as a successor to the Roman Empire: indeed the UK was created in the 18th century to be a strong and coherent state which could govern an empire. So, how do you balance our Celtic and Germanic traditions with these Roman traditions?

D: I think that the heritage of Rome is rather small in the English mind. I think it was a new kind of empire that was imagined — the so-called Fifth Empire or Fifth Monarchy in Cromwell's time. It was not the heir of Rome. But something that was essentially post-Roman and their empire was based mostly on English-German lines.

N: But during the 19th century the British colonies were governed using the model of the Roman Empire, for example, by having governors and proconsuls. And indeed some of the most popular subjects in schools at that time were Latin and Greek. So, Roman Imperial ideals and structures were very much embedded in the UK, particularly during the 19th century.

D: This is a part of traditional European heritage which affected all European countries including the Slavic world, for example in Poland, where Greek and Roman ideas prevail. But, the idea of a purely global market is much more Carthaginian than Roman as maintains the writer of *Father Brown* and *The Everlasting Man*… Chesterton?

N: G. K. Chesterton.

D: Yes, Chesterton had a very good idea that Carthaginian society was like a modern, Bourgeois, capitalist society. So, colonial, bourgeois England was much more Carthaginian than Roman. But the Roman part of English identity and heritage was also present. The Stuart Revolution and Protestantism were directed against that, The Fifth Empire was post-Roman. But the Roman heritage was partly restored after Cromwell's revolution. So, there are very complicated and interesting dialectic relations here. And there is a kind of point by Heidegger concerning Zeitgeschichte (it was translated into French by Henri Corbin by the word *l'historial*. I am using this in my *Noomachia*, it is the ancient French word for *l'historique*. For Corbin, the *historial* was not the same as in Heidegger, *das Zeitgeschichtliche* is different from *das Historische*. For Corbin, what matters is not the sequence of the facts of history, but the sequence of meanings. And I think that every group of people has its own *historial*. And it is the sequence of meanings that defines the interpretation of the facts. And I'm trying to restore this *l'historial* for all the peoples of the world: for Africa, for England, for France, for Eastern Europe…

N: For Russia as well, of course?

D: The Russian volume will be the last one. I am now on the twentieth volume and the Russian volume will be the twenty-first. Maybe it will need two volumes, I don't know, because from time to time I could not include in one volume everything that I wanted to say. I think the most problematic Logos will be the 'Russian Logos' because I know Russian culture better than the others. But at the same time that does not make it easier.

N: It is a handicap in some ways, isn't it?

D: Yes, yes, absolutely and in order to clear the field I was obliged to write these twenty books first in order to come to Russian Logos in order to see what influenced us and where we are in the world. We are not isolated, we could not construct our Logos based only on ourselves. So I have dedicated two volumes to Greece, one volume to the Latin world, one to the German world, one to…

N: What about the Catholic world under the Papal leadership? Have you devoted a volume to this? It has had a huge influence on Europe.

D: So, it is interesting. I have discovered that the Logos of Europe was absolutely changed during modernity. So something completely anti-European entered into European history. And now it is at the end. So, the absolute destruction of the classical European Logos, which is going on, now is almost over. But it is not changing into something completely new, but rather there is a restoration of the Pre-Indo-European, Paleo-European culture of the Great Mother which has nothing to do with Europe. So, it is not Indo-European Europe, the Europe of the last 4000 years, but something much more ancient. And I think Russia is at the crossroads between these different influences. So, we have Indo-European, Paleo-European, Turanian, Eurasian, matriarchal and

patriarchal traditions. It is very complicated, we have a lot of Latin influence, much more Greek influence, and we share something with all Slavic people: we have something very particular. So, it is a kind of combination and it is not easy to explain but all this previous study was needed in order to identify Russian Logos, or maybe the absence of it. I don't know the name of the last book because I am not sure that there is such a thing as 'Russian Logos'. For me the absence of a clear Logos for Great Britain was a surprise. Previously, I gave the name of the volume the 'British Logos', but I didn't find it.

N: Maybe you'll find it when you find Russia's Logos?

D: Maybe, maybe.

February 18

N: Alexander, what were your thoughts on the Forgiveness service we have just attended?

D: It's very important, it is a kind of synthesis of Orthodox Russian ethics. So, we could not be granted salvation relying only on our efforts. So, the only way to be saved is by the grace of God. So, Father Dmitri Smirnov, a very famous and influential Father and one of the best spiritual teachers in all Russia, gave a beautiful speech that we could sum up as follows: wherever you go, you go the wrong way. This is because human ways are wrong. And only God's ways are good and right. So, that is the idea. So, without the grace and help of God, a human is completely lost.

N: He also mentioned forgiveness…

D: Yes, we need to forgive. And, in order to be forgiven, we need to forgive others.

N: Yes, that's an important part of it, and so human action is key. But, he also said in order to get ultimate forgiveness we must of course look to Christ.

D: But the idea was that salvation is not logical. So, if for example we forgive only the innocent ones, and we don't forgive the guilty ones — that is not forgiveness. Forgiveness is of everyone…

N: Of course.

D: Because the injustice of the other is the reflection of our own sins. So, that is something that goes against hypocrisy. So, we think we are the good ones, that we are proper and well intentioned Christians. But inside we are sinners. So, to forgive is the only way to be honest, to forgive not the innocent but the guilty, and of course we are the guilty.

N: Are you able to do this personally in your life?

D: No, No. It is almost impossible. But that is a kind of normative horizon, an ethical horizon that we should go closer to. So, I think the idea of the normative is unreachable but we need to try to reach it. So, it is very interesting that if you put so absolute an

imperative, maybe we could not accomplish it but our intentions should go that way. And God judges intentions more than actions, so we should try. Maybe we will fail and certainly we will fail. But nevertheless we should go that way, that way and not the other way. The only way is to understand that human ways are doomed, and that only God could really save us. And Forgiveness Day is the beginning of the…

N: Lent period…

D: that is the period of fasting, and…

N: You are going to start this now, aren't you?

D: Yes, yes, tomorrow it begins. And Forgiveness Day is a key day to begin the fasting period because if you have anger, or if you have some fury inside and think about revenge, or have some evil thought maybe about guilty persons or structures or whatever, then the real period of fasting will be destroyed immediately. So you should try to start this fasting period by being pure. So, Forgiveness Day is very, very important in this respect.

N: I noticed that you have just been to confession. Do you feel spiritually cleansed now? Are you now ready to start fasting?

D: Yes, I will start fasting tomorrow. Today is the last day of Maslenitsa. It is important as well that on this day in ancient times everybody in the church asked forgiveness from each other crying: 'forgive me', 'прости меня'. Today on a smaller scale, maybe people who know each other ask forgiveness from each ourselves, but in the ancient times everybody did. And so on this day throughout the whole of Russia the only words heard were 'forgive me', and that's very important as is this capacity to forgive fools and enemies (i.e. personal enemies, not enemies of the Nation or Church and not Satan).

N: On a slightly different topic, why do you think God told Abraham to sacrifice his son Isaac? And if you were in that situation, would you be able to do the same with your children?

D: Søren Kierkegaard has explained this very nicely in his book. So, that is the difference between a national hero and a religious hero. Because a national hero could sacrifice almost everything including his children (as we know from Greek history and Greek dramas and theatre) in order to save his country or people, so Greek heroes would sacrifice their daughters, sons and themselves…

N: Yes, for example, Agamemnon's sacrifice of his daughter Iphigenia to appease the goddess Artemis.

D: Exactly, and this is not so rare. But, what is important is that religious sacrifice is something completely different. There is no compensation with glory, and the memory and appreciation of your people or society. Religious sacrifice is a little bit absurd. So, nobody will glorify you because you sacrifice your own son without reason. So, if you sacrifice your children, it is a very serious act. But if you do it for some reason that is

one thing. But if for no purpose, it is quite another thing. So, religion is something very special, it is really super human. There was no reason for Abraham to sacrifice Isaac, no reason at all. It was only submission to God's will, with no human rationality, no purpose and that was the essence of the religious act of Abraham, and that was Kierkegaard's explanation.

N: Ok, and what is your explanation then? Why do you think God asked Abraham to do it?

D: I think that is very, very difficult to say. I think that there is as well a kind of biblical hermeneutics involved. I could not go into details as it transcends human understanding. It has something to do with the very nature of religious logic; for example, it was a prefiguration of Christ, because Christ was as well sacrificed without reason…

N: But, he went through with the sacrifice, Abraham didn't; it was just the intention to do so which was important, wasn't it?

D: Yes, but maybe that was not the case for the sacrifice of the Son of God. The sacrifice of the son of man (and only man not of God) is not enough to save mankind.

N: And if you were in that situation, if God called you, would you be able to sacrifice the ones you loved?

D: I could not say. I have never thought about that; it is a huge decision. To hear the voice of God we need to be very pure, because we could mistake very easily the voice of God for the voice of the Devil. So, our saints and spiritual elders suggest not to hear voices at all. So, follow God's will and be careful dealing with voices.

N: Somewhat related to this topic, in my film 'The Pillars of Heaven' a Ukrainian priest told me that he believes Putin is pleasing to God. Do you think he is pleasing to God?

D: The relations between man and God are a deep mystery. So, we could suggest something, we could suggest other things, but I think religiously Putin is not clear for me and for our people as well. We had real hope in him. Now we begin to be — 'we', not myself — 'we' as a people are beginning to be disappointed in him. But that doesn't mean that our understanding of what this man is is correct or incorrect. So, relations with God are quite different, we could not judge absolutely. For example, we see a sinner, an open sinner, and maybe he is a saint inside; it is a mystery of the human soul and the human heart. As well, for example, there are many, many histories of prostitutes or criminals that became saints finally and secretly. And Forgiveness Day teaches us to forgive, not to judge, so let God judge him.

N: Do you forgive Vladimir Putin?

D: I cannot.

N: You cannot forgive him?

D: No, because I'm not perfect. I'm very imperfect. I should forgive him. I have spoken with my spiritual father some time ago and said that I am very disappointed by Putin in all senses. I was very, very passionate about him. I supported him for many years. And love and appreciation and as well a kind of hatred, they go together. So, I asked for advice from my spiritual father after I confessed that I had begun to hate him because I had too many hopes, and almost everything was a deception and disillusion. And he (my spiritual father) said that I should try to overcome this.

N: Are you still trying to do this?

D: I am trying not to hate him. It is very, very hard, because it is not a question of being indifferent to him, because I had hope and when hope is lost, it's difficult to pass from hope to indifference, and from a kind of admiration of him. And now I see his decline, certainly his decline. Not a decline in power or a political decline, but I would say rather a moral, historical decline. I will try maybe during this fasting period to forgive him. He didn't do anything wrong, personally, individually against myself. It's nothing personal, nothing personal.

N: It was just your hopes for the country.

D: Absolutely, yes. He betrayed something much more serious for me than individual or personal crimes. Personal crimes for me are much easier to forgive than something that concerns my people, my country, my history, my understanding of the logic of the history. This is nothing personal. He was absolutely personally indifferent towards me, as I was towards him. So, it is something other.

N: Are you going to vote for him in the upcoming election?

D: No.

N: Are there any other candidates you see coming?

D: No, I don't vote. I think this is a kind of profanation of the real popular will. It is a simulacrum of real decision, and of what I consider to be real democracy, i.e. the participation of the people in its own destiny. But this is spectacle, it is a simulacrum. It is something ridiculous, I would say, and not Russian.

N: Democracy?

D: Yes, it is a kind of imitation of the Western system. And I could not judge how it works in the West, maybe good, but I doubt it…

N: I'm not so sure these days…

D: But in our situation it is pure simulacrum. It has nothing to do with the declaration of the will of the people: that is the fraud. Not in the counting of the votes, it is the vote in general. It is a kind of hypocrisy and fraud. So I don't like to participate in that. And, I see that notwithstanding the result, there is a kind of despair in people in these procedures of democracy: in the results of democracy in the counting of votes, the votes, the propaganda. There is a kind of indignity in all of this, and it is absolutely not Russian. Maybe it would be more honest to create a pure dictatorship. So we could not

change anything and nobody would care about our opinion. Then, if we were put to the edge of our tolerance, we would kill the dictator, and that is honest. But at the moment, there is a kind of spectacle: there is dictatorship but it is not openly recognised, but rather disguised in some kind of absolutely false democracy, or suspended democracy. When Putin started, it was all about how to overcome the pro-Western influence in Russia, and how to restore the verticality of power. And now it is an absurd comedy, a black comedy and nothing more, because it is too long. And there are no serious steps: either declare a dictatorship or return to democracy finally. Because if there were a return to democracy, we could say enough of that, all that is going on inside of our country is bad, evil, wrong. Everything is wrong. Putin is wrong in his politics inside of the country. That is a patriotic meaning; it is not liberal. Liberals have their solution, which is completely strange to us. They don't represent something serious, because now it is the question of Putin vs. the Russian people, which is something completely different, and not Putin vs. the pro-Western liberal minority. And now there is no democracy and there is no real dictatorship either…

N: So, your solution is either true democracy or true dictatorship?

D: Either democracy or dictatorship. But now there is a kind of unnatural mix between them. There is no democracy and no dictatorship, but something half-half. So, when you seriously think that it is democracy, you will immediately grasp that there is no such democracy. But if you think and try to adapt yourself to dictatorship you perceive that you are not in a dictatorship absolutely. There is no strong will, there is no strong line, everything is hesitant. So, I think that we have had enough of that, it will last at least six years more but we have already had enough now.

N: The idea that 'democracy is pregnant with tyranny' is a Greek idea. And following another Greek idea, the great philosopher Socrates gave his life for his thoughts and his philosophy. Are you in any way influenced by that? Would you give your life for your thoughts, your philosophy?

D: Absolutely for the philosophy, yes. If you cannot sacrifice your life for your ideas, your ideas are absolutely futile, nothing. I would not sacrifice my life for democracy — it's not my ideal. Also, that was not so much Socrates' ideal. He sacrificed his life for his philosophical and ethical principles, and I admire that. I think that is absolutely coherent and an absolutely philosophical way to deal with your life. So *ideas do matter*, and they matter more than human life, that is for sure. And there is philosophical dignity in this testimony to carry it out in practice. But not for democracy. I am not so much against democracy, I am against liberal democracy, but not democracy itself. I think there are different kinds of democracy. I like direct democracy, for example…

N: The Swiss, they have the most direct democracy.

D: Yes, absolutely, so I like that. I like some aspects of American democracy in early American society, since the people on the ground know better what concerns this

dimension. For example, if you are living in a village you know better who is a good guy and who is a bad guy. But when people from above dictate to you about who is better or worse without consideration of something, which you know certainly better than they do, that is a kind of rule which I don't like at all. However, when you give people from the village the right to decide about philosophy (e.g. what is Good?), or religion or geopolitical strategy — that is a perversion. You need to fool them, to trick them in order to get the decision you know already. And that is a kind of simulacrum of democracy. And in modern democracy people choose a president, that transcends the understanding of normal people. Who will be a bad president or a good president is the decision of the political elites. So, for example, war or peace is the decision of the sovereign or Tsar or president or leader or chief of state, and we cannot influence that directly. But for all the things that concern ourselves directly, and where we have competence, democracy is much better than hierarchy.

N: Thank for your time this season.

D: Forgive me.

N: Forgive me.

Chapter 2

Spring

Introduction

In this thrilling chapter we plunge headfirst into matters of a military nature, whilst also finding time to discuss espionage, Grand Strategy and personal regrets, amongst others.

For our opening act, picture to yourself a fine spring morning in a quiet military museum in Moscow…

May 8

N: Alexander, you are a known expert on matters of war and geopolitics, so in our first discussion today we are going to deal with the topic of war. What is your conception of war? What is its essence and purpose? Indeed, is there an ultimate cause of war?

D: I think, as Heraclitus said, that 'war is the father of things'. War is a necessary part of a human being because only in front of war does peace, the other very important concept of human life and being, acquire meaning. If there is no war, there will be no peace. So we should not divide or make absolute war, i.e. either war or peace. We need to understand them dialectically, so if war is possible, peace is possible. If there is a danger of war, there is a possible solution of peace. And, why is there war? Because there is a kind of inner hostility in nature, and in 'being' more than in nature. Natural hostility is based on difference because if there is difference then there is division. If there is division, there is a different aspect that doesn't coincide. If something doesn't coincide in part or as a whole, then there is a kind of conflict between them. So there is a kind of natural consequence of difference, which is the base, the ontology of being, because without difference we could not say there is or there is not because everything is based on duality. And in order to underline, to stress the duality we need war as a limit. So war is a kind of limit of difference. And peace is the other limit. So when we have difference, we could accentuate what is different in difference and we could try to overcome or reconcile or harmonise what is different in difference. So, *war is an ontological event*. It is not based on the evil will of someone. There is a kind of aggression as a logical consequence of division, of difference. That is why war is a permanent feature of human history. Not because of the evil nature of mankind, but

something that has to do with 'being' itself. Not with some adjacent element to 'being'. It is not something external to 'being'; the essence of 'being' reveals itself through war. But when we are speaking about war we should think always about peace, because peace is the logical consequence of war. War is primordial, it is primary, because separation comes before reconciliation. So in order to unite something you need to divide something. *War is division*. And I think that we need to understand war as an ontological and historical phenomenon. So, when they tried to establish the concept of a 'Just War' in different juridical schools, that was correct because they tried to understand the legitimate limits of war. So, just or patriotic or defensive war is considered to be legitimate, but aggressive war is illegitimate. But the line could not be too fixed, because what one party considers to be legitimate, the other could consider illegitimate. There is also a little bit of an ethnocentric vision. For example, ethnocentrism, the concept developed by W.G. Sumner, is based on the existence of the 'We-group' and the 'They-group'. So in the eyes of 'We-group' war could be just, but in the eyes of 'They-group' it could be unjust and vice-versa. So, being part of the essence of being and human being and human history we need to take into consideration these roles of 'We-group' and 'They-group' because we could not consider a 'Just War' as such precisely because war is a consequence of division and if there is division, there are two poles and not one. If we have division, then we have two points of view. If we have two points of view, we have 'We-group' and 'They-group', and what is just for one could be unjust for the other. And I wouldn't give to war a kind of absolute dimension; it is always dialectical. There is also a dialectical play between 'We-group' and 'They-group', and we should not say that the 'We-group' perhaps represents human kind and is good. There could not exist an absolute 'We-group' and 'They-group'. If we imagine for a moment that we declare mankind as an absolute 'We-group', then immediately we receive the concept of 'They-group' as aliens. Aliens are part of 'They-group' and they should be described as evil ones, as dangerous, and a threat for humanity. So, we could unite humanity by creating a new 'We-group', but at the same time we would create a 'They-group', which would be our absolute opposition and which would be blamed for being the other. So, that is the concept of 'the other', which is the source and root of the metaphysics and ontology of war.

N: What about the art of war itself? Are you influenced by great masters like Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Tolstoy? For example, by Sun Tzu's concept that the best military strategist wins a war without having to fight. And by Tolstoy's concept that war is chaotic and unpredictable and we cannot possibly explain its causality. Or finally by Clausewitz who believed that war is inherently political, i.e. it is politics by other means, it is compelling the enemy to fulfil your will, your political will, by violence. What are your comments on these great theorists of war?

D: First of all I think that all of them have something that is very reasonable inside. For example, Sun Tzu's concept is a kind of product of Chinese civilisation, which is based on balance. So, *the most important value for the Chinese is balance*. They can reduce any kind of war to the Yin and Yang concept; there is the feminine principle against the masculine principle, and between them is confrontation. So, war is always bipolar. And Chinese culture tries to diminish the importance of war by inscribing it not in the context of peace, but in the context of balance. That is the difference between Chinese culture and Eurasian culture, because war was the highest value not of the Chinese but of the peoples of the Steppe, the peoples of Eurasia, of Turan. That was the kind of dialectic between Chinese society, which is based on balance, and Turanian society, which is based on aggression. And war was much more important for Turanians, Mongols, Turks, Indo-Europeans, Sarmatians, and other nomadic people. That was the dialectic of Chinese history, i.e. balance and harmony over aggression and war. The case of Clausewitz is a more formal recognition of the nature of war as a continuation of politics. Politics is, according to Carl Schmitt, based on the concept of 'friend and enemy'. So, war and politics have this as their main logic because there is no reason to have politics without having opponents, and there could not be politics without opponents, including in the liberal concept of politics, for example as in Karl Popper's classic ideologically liberal work *The Open Society and Its Enemies*. So the political idea has meaning where there is a kind of contradiction, opponent or enemy, and therefore war proceeds. The 'friend and enemy' concept is inscribed in politics. Clausewitz has suggested that war is the continuation of politics by other means, but we could also say that politics is the same as war by other means. So, vice-versa is also true if we accept the concept of the ontology of war. Ontology is something that has to do with 'being' itself, and not with some artificial construction over 'being'. Concerning Tolstoy, it is very interesting: according to Tolstoy's concept, society has a dual nature. There is the evil nature represented by the state, hierarchy, the organised Church, all of which represent war in his eyes. And there is the other part of the society — the peaceful people (народ) which is quite opposite to the state. So in his anarchist vision of reality, there is an absolute value, i.e. *peace*, the people and a kind of equality of the peaceful, rural being. That is more or less close to Joseph Proudhon's concept of the small agrarian community as the only form of desirable human society, which is without private ownership, without money and with no state at all. Kropotkin, the Russian anarchist, and Tolstoy were partisans of these concepts. In their vision ,war is anti-human and peace is human. So they were total anarchists. But it is interesting that anarchists as well led the war against the state. In that case, war is the enemy of peace. So, you need to unite the peaceful forces in order to destroy the state, hierarchy and organised Church, and in doing so you destroy war. So, war becomes the enemy. And this is the same logic as in liberalism, or globalisation. Globalisation and

internationalism are pacifist. But in order to install a pacifist order on a global scale you need to destroy states and the people who don't share liberal ideas, i.e. the enemies. So, in order to install universal peace, you should wage universal war. What is universal war? It is another part of 'being'. One part of 'being' is extreme militarism that openly declares the will to destroy everything, i.e. total war. To declare a total war against an enemy, for example by destroying or annihilating an enemy absolutely, is the same as this anarchist/Tolstoyan/liberal/pacifist vision. In order to install universal globalist peace you need to destroy the war mongers, all the aggressive states and rogue states. And so you start to bomb them, you start to destroy hundreds and millions of people in order to promote universal peace. So, the problem is not either peace or war. The problem is how to treat war and peace together, without one there is not the other. If there is no war, there will be no peace, because peace is a concept that is based on a relation to war. Thus, we should accept both parts: peace and war. War is possible, which means that peace is possible. There is the threat of war, so there is the salvation of peace. If there is no threat or danger of war, there is no peace. And if we try to install or impose absolute peace with no war, we will be obliged to destroy the other part of the same concept, because without war there is no peace. And that is a paradox that could be solved in my opinion only by accepting war as a possibility and by accepting the metaphysics and ontology of war (i.e. that war is a dimension of being as such), and trying to put that in the context of the dominating system of value of a particular society. For example, if we are dealing with Chinese society, balance prevails over war and peace. Too much peace is bad and too much war is bad for Chinese society. But if we consider Turanian society, Eurasian society, or the nomadic tribes, then there is a completely different culture. There is the culture that puts war above peace, more war is better. This is neither bad or good in itself, this is simply Turanian culture. And this is Indo-European as well, because all the history of Indo-European civilisation was based precisely on this super evaluation of war. The warrior type of society, aggression, the hierarchical state are inscribed in the soul of Indo-European culture. When we go for example to Russian culture we discover a society that values peace much more than war. In every type of society, whether Chinese, Turanian or Russian, all of their history is war, always and without stop. But the understanding of war and the interpretation of the hermeneutics of war is different. Russians are peaceful people, for us peace is much more important and has a much greater value than war. For us what is important is victory, victory is the end of war. Our celebration of our victory in the Second World War is not a glorification of our heroic act, it is much more a glorification of the end of the war. So, the celebration is the end. We don't like war, we suffer in war, we are not too much inspired by the heroic act, but we are much more inspired by the end. So, we are very good warriors, Russians. But, in our system of values war is not a value, and heroic war is not a value. However, defensive war is valued because defensive war in

our consciousness is linked with peace. Defensive war means peace and that there is no war. So, while we are struggling and fighting all our history, we at the same time are totally peaceful in our understanding. So, our subjective evaluation of war or society is a kind of moral judgement and not a fact. So, we could declare every war defensive. We could declare that we are always fighting for peace and fight nevertheless. Or we could accept war as a form of 'being', like Turanian and classical European aggressive male heroic societies do, and accept war as a value. Or we could accept peace as absolute peace and then there would be the continuation of war by other means or by the same means, but even more deadly. So, the problem is that if war is inscribed in 'being', then it is something metaphysical and ontological and so our evaluation is secondary, but war is primordial as is the response to war, i.e. peace. We could call this a realist attitude towards war. So, in that sense I am a realist. War is the essential feature of a human (and not only human) and we need to accept it as a possibility: it is always probable or possible. And this approach demands a more responsible attitude. When we exclude war we become irresponsible and we are not afraid of war, so we don't put all our responsibility into avoiding it, because it is unlikely. And that is what war games are; now war is like a game. It is in the air, it is from a distance and people are dying somewhere on the other side of the screen. That is an irresponsible, liberal and pacifist attitude towards war. When you imagine yourself in the middle of a tank battle or a fight in ancient times where you are going to kill the enemy in front of you, and the enemy in front of you is going to kill you, you take a decision about peace and war on a much more responsible basis than just destroying or exterminating some sub-humans or war mongers on the other side of the screen. This concept of 'Total War' was celebrated by Carl Schmitt. 'Total War' is the radical limit of militarism, it is absolute militarism and is very rare and almost nonexistent. And 'Total War' is the logical consequence of liberalism, liberal peace, pacifism and internationalism. So, if somebody doesn't accept pacifism or liberalism, they are not considered to be human anymore. That is dehumanisation of the other and that is the radical form of racism, embedded in liberalism. Formally liberalism opposes racism, but inside it is absolutely racist because pacifism is the other name for 'Total War'. So, the solution in the case of Carl Schmitt is *formal war*, i.e. war with laws, ethics, rules and limits. And, for example if you overcome some limits you will be punished by the other. So a kind of noble war, maybe not just because justice is based on point of view of the 'We-group' and 'They-group', but a kind of chivalrous war. War with rules, war that is based on the idea that we should not kill the innocent, we should not affect the civil population. And there are ethics of war, but ethics of war are only possible when we recognise a kind of legitimacy of war. If war is possible, if we cannot blame it as such, then we need to deal with it, and in dealing with war we need to limit its titanic, destructive, inhuman side. So, for example, the enemy is formal; today you are an enemy, but tomorrow you

will be a friend, so we have no reason to annihilate you. To win, yes, but not destroy or annihilate. Today you are an enemy and today we are fighting in order to win, but that is not eternal, you are still human.

N: Ok, you mentioned a lot of interesting topics there and we will go into the details of pacifism and the other types of war later. But following on from my previous question, the military theorists I mentioned (Sun Tzu, Clausewitz and Tolstoy) were all active combatants in war. Have you ever fought in a war yourself? And if you have, have you ever taken a life in war?

D: No, I didn't fight in a war, but that was because of circumstances. When I was young and fit to be mobilised, there was no war, or at least I wasn't mobilised for that. And after that, all my life has been war, but not in the physical way. I think there could come the moment when you will be obliged to fight in a real war. I was present in some difficult situations, for example in the front of Southern Ossetia in Georgia, but I didn't participate in the war. But I cannot exclude the fact that psychologically or in my opinion I am fighting. I am a fighter, I am a warrior maybe, but not a soldier. So, there is a kind of difference.

N: So, without personal experience in fighting a war, on what are you basing these theories of war?

D: I think that is interesting. I have noticed one thing in speaking with many veterans and people participating in both local conflicts in Chechnya, Donbas, Southern Ossetia and Abkhazia and in wars in Afghanistan, as well as in Africa in different campaigns; I have noticed that the Russian consciousness is very, very special. For example, the people that were in very difficult military situations, i.e. killing, suffering, or even being tortured, the Russians didn't let the war enter inside their soul. They remained very peaceful, and afterwards the influence, the impact of war fades with time, and they become normal, peaceful civilians and citizens. So, Russians don't let war enter into their soul. I have let war enter into my soul. So that is different.

N: How has war entered into your soul?

D: Maybe metaphysically, maybe by the influence of Western culture, which is much more warlike. For example, I am living in a state of war. And I noticed that many Russian soldiers and heroes while in a war live as if it were peace, with human relations, with friends and songs, etc. — sometimes very brave, very, very heroic in every sense with sacrifices, or very aggressive sometimes. But the metaphysics of war avoids them totally. So when they return from the battlefield, they become once more peaceful and very loyal to society and to the state. I am much more of an anarchist, maybe because I don't think that the state can influence my inner life or thought. If I agree, I agree; if I disagree, I disagree. I am a little bit of a revolutionary. I think that revolution, the metaphysical revolution and the fight for ideas, is much more important than loyalty to the state. And normal wars, physical wars, hot wars are too bureaucratic

for me, i.e. you have to obey, you have to follow orders. I prefer Holy War. When there is only God and the Spirit and Historical being that obliges us to either accept something or to challenge something. That is my attitude. I am a warrior, not a soldier. But that was clear in my youth. I was against the war imposed by the state, whose ideology I absolutely refused, I was anti-communist, I could not fight for communism. And I was opposed to it, so there was not so much a choice, but that was a condition I would like to change. But over time our state has changed its ideology, actually our state has lost any kind of ideology. Relations with the state and the possibility of a hot war, a war in the normal sense, these relations are changed positively. Now, if I were drafted, with great pleasure I would participate in a patriotic war for the values of Russia. But I think I could be much more useful in other fields, fighting the other war: ideological war, metaphysical war, the war of the mind. I am working precisely on this field in a series of books called *Noomakhia* (Ноомахия), i.e. the war of the mind, or mind-war. I have already written twenty books on this topic and I think that the most dramatic war is spiritual war, the mind war, the war of ideas. This is not a kind of way to avoid real war, not at all, not at all, because it demands very manly qualities; you are fighting ideologically. You are not in less danger than in a normal war. I think that a normal war is a kind of relief from some psychological, metaphysical, ideological or spiritual tensions. The French poet Arthur Rimbaud said that spiritual war is much more difficult than normal physical war, but I appreciate the soldiers and warriors as well. I think that in war most men show and reveal their true nature. But in any case war is a kind of very human activity. When the value of man is clear and naked, there is a naked soul that appears in war. The German soul manifests itself as Ernst Jünger described in his fantastic romance about war. The Russian soul as well, but the Russian soul is peaceful. So war is the way to open the immense peacefulness of the Russian soul, but peace is conceived in a Russian way, it is Russian peace, so we are struggling for Russian peace.

N: What is Russian peace? How is it different to other nationalities' conception of peace?

D: For example, German peace is based on the victory of German order over non-German order, and not only in purely egoistic terms, but as well in rational terms, so that is the victory of rationality, i.e. German rationality. But Russian peace is inclusive. It is not by chance that in the Russian language the same word мир (mir) has three different meanings: 'peasant community', 'universe', and 'peace'. So for us, 'peace' is inclusion in the universe. And the universe for us is not so much order, but a kind of openness. So in our understanding the world is not based on hierarchy or order, but on openness. In Russian there is another term which is difficult to translate — Воля (volya), it means open space in all senses, i.e. a psychologically open space and landscape with no limits. So 'volya' is the same for the world, мир and peace. And we

try to include everybody in this concept of openness, and when we achieve this we are very happy. We don't want to exploit the other or to impose our order (Russian order) on anyone, or to conquer or humiliate anyone, or to put ourselves above the other, but rather we want to include everyone in our openness. So we consider limits and borders as a kind of particular and defensive identity and as a challenge. We are imperial, but imperial not in the sense of domination, but rather we are trying to put everybody into this openness. We try to give this 'volya', this inclusion into openness, to everybody. It is the goal of our war that coincides with a creation of empire. But it is not a nationalist empire, nor an egoistic empire, nor a rational empire. Putting everybody into openness doesn't mean that we embed them or try to put them into order, not at all. We try to liberate them from the limits, because in our understanding the world is the absence of limit, so it is a kind of infinite, something infinite. And that is the Russian attitude towards peace and as well towards war. We are fighting to include the other not into sameness but into openness because we have no such strict and formal concept as 'the same'. To be Russian means to be open, and not to be Russian or German or French, for example. Honestly, we think that every normal person in the world is Russian. Maybe it is chauvinistic, but in a positive way. If we see something human in other cultures, we say 'oh, that is Russian, you are exactly like us', because we have no restrictive concept of what is Russian. Russian is universal, it is open. But what is closed is not Russian, and we have a kind of problem with it. So that is a different understanding of identity. Our understanding of identity is based on this inclusive openness, and we could not imagine the other. So, when I try to tell Russians about the existence of other systems of values, they don't understand me. For them everything should be Russian or is Russian or doesn't exist at all. And that is an ethnocentric vision, but in the Russian case it is special ethnocentrism and has nothing to do with, for example, British or German or French or Spanish ethnocentrism. However, the Spanish are more like us, they are more open, I would say, and the result of their colonisation over South America in comparison with the colonisation over North America is very, very meaningful and clear because although they committed very many violent and disgusting acts against the population they accepted them in. But the British in North America formally excluded the other (i.e. the American Indians) first of all. And in Latin America they included the other, finally, as can be seen by the Creole phenomenon. So Russians are special, not better or worse than others, but different. We have a different meaning of what Russian identity is, what the universe is, what the world is, what war is and what peace is.

N: Again, there are many, many things to explore there, if only we had the time now to do so. But while we are standing in front of what looks like a ballistic missile, what is your attitude towards nuclear war, non-proliferation and deterrence theory? For example, do you think that nuclear war can be won or should it never be fought? Or should we just get rid of nuclear weapons entirely?

D: If there are nuclear weapons, nuclear war is possible. According to my understanding and that which is more or less common to Russian psychology, Russia is obliged to have nuclear weapons because our modernisation (including in the field of warfare) is defensive. We always try to preserve our identity, our sovereignty, our freedom in front of the other who is challenging us. So we are obliged to follow the other in a defensive way. Many times in history we have stolen projects or weaponry. Some things we developed ourselves, but most of the time we steal technological secrets from the West, as they are more focused on technology. And I think that position is explainable. I am against modern war because I am against the modern world and modernity as such. Modernity involves an accumulation of technological tools with a parallel loss of 'being'. I am critical towards modernity, so I could not praise missiles and technological achievements including in the Russian case. I think that modernisation is a bad thing. Therefore modern war is much worse than traditional war. And I think that there is no progress, there is only degradation. We are in front of this degradation, and the signs of these degradational developments are the technological aspects of reality. And nuclear war in my opinion is the worst kind of war. Not because it could destroy everything, but because it is based on annihilation, and leaves no place, no space for the heroic spirit. You cannot be a hero pushing a button which destroys the planet. It is not a heroic act; it is cowardly. The people who are using missiles are cowards, and I cannot respect cowards. I could respect the man with a sword. I could respect the man with a traditional weapon, who is fighting in a noble way against other people with swords as well. In my opinion real war is when you show that you are brave, that you are strong and that you can stand the challenge. Nuclear war and technological war is a war for the extermination of the other, and I think that is liberal, modern and globalist. But in the Russian case it is defensive globalism. We are obliged to create such warfare capability in order to be left alone…

N: So you are for deterrence theory essentially?

D: Yes, and if it were possible to destroy this type warfare and return to the classical way of wars I would support it absolutely. I would be the first to destroy all that on a mutual basis. But when someone possesses a nuclear weapon it is a kind of reason or argument for them to impose their rule on you and if you don't want to be ruled by another with a different identity and system of values, you need to defend yourself. So, in a practical way I am a partisan of the proliferation of nuclear weapons because it destroys the reason for nuclear weapons, i.e. if everybody possesses a nuclear weapon, nobody possesses it.

N: Sorry, how does that work?

D: If everybody has a nuclear weapon, nobody can use it. If there is an even distribution of nuclear weapons, everybody arrives at the point where any use of them is impossible. So, everyone comes to the conclusion that it is better to destroy them all.

But now possessing nuclear weapons provides a kind of reason for one to make a dictatorship over the other. For example, if Israel has a nuclear weapon, Iran should not because otherwise there might be a kind of balance and Israel does not want a balance; it wants domination — we have and you don't have, and don't try to get it. That is uneven and that is a racist attitude, a racist nuclear system, so that is why in a pragmatic way I support nuclear weapons and the proliferation of nuclear weapons in order to stop this unipolar domination, and I would say mechanical unipolarity, this blackmailing system. If we have this huge weapon then by having it we can dictate to the other how to behave themselves, and determine who the rogue country is, and so on. I think this is a defensive measure which is completely reasonable in a concrete situation but very bad in itself. Bad not because Russia has nuclear missiles or weapons, but because there are nuclear weapons. So, a nuclear weapon is a kind of screen onto which the degradation of humanity is reflected and we are involved in this degradation, not by our own will, but by following the other in a defensive way. This began during the time of Peter the Great. I have a rather negative attitude towards Peter the Great and towards his modernisation and Westernisation, but at the same time I understand that he was obliged to do something like this. He lost many aspects of our traditional, spiritual, religious and cultural identity. But at the same time he was obliged to go into the hell of modernisation and Westernisation in order to defend, maybe in hellish conditions, Russian sovereignty. But during this defensive modernisation (including in the communist period) the identity of the state, society and culture became worse and worse. So, I think that that was the degradation. We are as well following this defensive fight of progress in weaponry, not only in this aspect of modernisation, but in a general sense we are going deeper and deeper into the hell of the modernity. We are obliged to do this — I know this is not an explanation — but we cannot change our path. So we are trying to be one step behind in this process of modernisation. But only one step; if we were three or four steps behind in the modernisation process we would be overcome and dominated. And this is tragic. When I see a missile, a Russian missile or a nuclear missile, I despair. I hate it, but unfortunately it is necessary. It is a hellish thing, it is a cowardly, hellish thing. But in order to end this situation we must first destroy the West and after that we will destroy everything else.

N: If you were in a position of power and were in charge of the nuclear button, would you press it, if the moment came?

D: I am thinking about that and I would always be ready to press it, and I think that…

N: Would you press it though? Ready to press is different? Would you actually press it though, if the moment came?

D: Yes.

N: You would press it?

D: Yes. And I would always be ready. Putin recently said the same thing. So, if we were forced to either respond or not respond against a direct nuclear threat, we would prefer to destroy mankind. And that is one step back, one step back. We are defending ourselves at any price.

N: But there is nothing to defend if you destroy mankind, everything would be gone.

D: But they will never achieve their goal. They will never make us submit. So, the cost — I agree — is the highest. But we have a kind of justification for that: our defensive role in that. I would never antagonise the other with nuclear weapons. Pushing the button is the last solution, but it should be taken and it will be taken in the face of an extreme situation. Putin said something like that: if there is no Russia in the world, let such a world die…

N: What is the extreme situation?

D: Should the West, globalism and unipolarity represent a danger for us, leading to the destruction and defeat of our position, then in that sense our defense of multipolarity is either/or: either the West agrees with multipolarity, not with our domination, not our domination, but with multipolarity. Let us alone and the other alone — that is our demand. If we are obliged to accept unipolarity or die or destroy everything, we will destroy everything because without our own truth we have no reason to exist. Globalisation is a process which destroys Russian identity; it does not allow it to exist. We cannot accept this. So if we are obliged to defend multipolarity (multipolarity and not our domination) or destroy the planet, we will destroy the planet. And that is not only my opinion or Putin's opinion, it is a kind of logic that is inscribed in our history. This is very, very dramatic and we understand this. But what is interesting is that the source of this challenge is not us, we are fighting only to live and to be independent. *We don't challenge the West itself, we challenge the universalism of the West*. These are two different things. We are defensive in a sense. We are ready to die and to kill everybody in order to save ourselves. But we are not aggressive. We don't want global domination. We would like to include everybody in our openness. And this is not an ultimatum, it is not blackmail, we are not blackmailing people. *We are fighting now not for a bipolar world but for a multipolar world*. And our seriousness in this belief is manifested in that possibility of pushing the button; without that, nobody will take us seriously and globalists will put into practice their plan. We are absolutely sure of that. This is based on our analysis of the logic of Western civilisation. So it is not only the modern leaders of the West that are responsible for this. The entire logic of the development of modernity (i.e. the Western European or North American phenomenon) is responsible. It is a historical decision. The 'Push the Button' scenario is based on history, and on an understanding of the logic and metaphysics of history. And it should be completely clear that behind this decision or behind this possibility is as well the metaphysics of Russia. So, multipolarity for us is the only way to exist. And if we have

the possibility and if we are forced to make a final decision either to exist as Russian or to destroy humanity, we would consider the possibility of the destruction of humanity. But the guilt will lie with the Western side because we would be acting in self-defence, and never, never offensively. For example, we could talk about two different kinds of world domination: communist and capitalist, or Russian world order against Western world order. In this case, there could be doubt over who is responsible for defensive or offensive action, but fighting in defence of the multipolar world is something else, it is completely different. There is no symmetry in this. We are fighting to be left alone and not to invade the other or to impose our rule onto somebody else.

N: So your solution to these problems is that everyone should have nuclear weapons and exist in a multipolar world order. But doesn't just multiplying the number of players and dramatically adding to their destructive capability considerably increase the risk of nuclear war occurring either by accident, miscalculation, increased competition, etc.? For example, if you go back to one of the golden ages of multipolarity during the Napoleonic period, there was constant fighting among the great powers. So, does your solution really solve the problem of nuclear war or does it actually make it more likely?

D: No, I think that asymmetry is the most dangerous. If you possess nuclear weapons, you are tempted to base your geopolitical position on this. And that is precisely what we see now. For example, I cannot understand why Israel having a nuclear weapon is much safer and more just than Iran having it. I would prefer nobody to have nuclear weapons. But who will be the judge? Everybody will try to hide their nuclear weapons in order to reappear with an unexpected advantage in the strategic balance of power. So, I think that is a very bad idea. Nuclear multipolarity is bad, evil and dangerous. But it is much more dangerous, for example, to have nuclear weapons only in the hands of the West because the West failed the exam of ruling of the world on a really universal and balanced basis. And that is very important; at one stage everybody agreed to a kind of globalisation and cessation of hostilities, and the West was obliged precisely in that unipolar moment to behave itself in a friendly way: to accept differences, to tolerate cultures that have nothing to do with Western universalism, liberalism, capitalism, open markets, democracy and so on, and so on. And that was a serious exam that could have changed everything. So, if there were confidence in the West as a kind of impartial judge who carries out open and transparent dialogue and polylogue with the other, it could lead to the destruction of nuclear weapons and a multipolar world could have been granted, could have been proposed as a gift to humanity by Western civilisation in the unipolar moment at the beginning of the 1990s. There was an opportunity for this, instead of encircling Russia with NATO, the promotion of a globalist, liberal agenda insisting on the universality of human rights, liberalism and individualism. These are values of Western civilisation, but if you identify Western values with global values, then that is pure aggression, colonisation and domination. After that the destiny of

nuclear confrontation was solved in a negative way. So, the risks and dangers have become higher precisely because the West has lost its chance as it could not propose in its decisive moment to implement real multipolarity itself. It insisted on unipolarity and didn't make a gift of multipolarity to humanity, and because the peaceful way to grant multipolarity was lost, this will be the stake of future wars. And that is the problem, that is why I don't blame missiles like that, we need them. I hate to say that we need them, and that we will need them more in the future up until the moment when we reach multipolarity. And now we have no confidence, zero confidence in the West. I think China and the Islamic world will follow us in this conviction. After that African and maybe some European countries and Latin America. But when we achieve a multipolar order we will be the first to destroy nuclear weapons in a consensual way, and promise not to use them ever again.

N: But, even in this multipolar world order, you would never be able to prove that states had truly given these weapons up, e.g. there could be states who secretly kept them or were secretly building them in order to achieve hegemony later on. So, the fundamental roots of the problem (i.e. the technology and know how and man's eternal struggle for power and control) will remain even in a multipolar world order.

D: The destiny of global death lies not in Russia using nuclear weapons, but in technology and its growing role. So, I hope the intellectual elite of humanity, not only in the West or in Russia, will in one moment understand that technology is not a tool, and is not destiny. I agree with Heidegger absolutely on this. So, it is not Russia or America who will push the button, technological progress will push the button in one way or another. Technology is not destiny or fate. And in order to save ourselves from this 'Push the Button' moment, we need not to destroy Russia, nor diminish the use of nuclear weapons, instead we should change our minds. That is precisely the mind-war. The understanding of technology, the role of technology in our civilisation; these are the greatest dangers. For example, artificial intelligence and the replacement of humans by post-human entities will increase the risk of nuclear apocalypse. Maybe, maybe in the last moment before destroying humanity and the planet, the human soul might be able to take a step back. But in the case of robots there is no such chance. Maybe there is the chance of salvation when we are dealing with humans because the human soul is a mystery — maybe we are ready to push the button when obliged, but maybe we will not. We pretend we will. We persuade ourselves and the other that we will do so, but maybe not. So, we say we will do so, but maybe not because we are human and maybe we will decide differently. Robots will not hesitate.

N: In relation to this, what are your thoughts on Putin's recent comment that the future of war will be determined by whoever controls Artificial Intelligence?

D: When humans have control over technology there is the possibility of return and the possibility to make a decision other than the decision to just follow the technical

process. When we are total slaves to this technological process, then there is no possibility of decision. And that is precisely what is called the *singularity moment*. So, we are approaching this moment and our defence is not only of our identity, it is the defence of humanity against a technological future. We are one step back not because we are too stupid, but because we should combine a defensive response to this challenge with the moral and metaphysical rejection of this material progress. We are obliged to follow this logic, this logic we consider to be imposed on us and on our peaceful and very open Russian soul. So, maybe that is eschatology, I don't know, but there is something deeper here than just the bad West or evil Russia or domination or resources, because the same problems could be solved differently. When we say that the fight for oil is inevitable, everything is inevitable, the economy could adapt to any kind of situation: absence of oil, presence of oil, the fight for oil, the just division of oil. The economy is not destiny. Destiny is something deeper. And technology, progress, linear time, modernity are not destiny. We should deal with these metaphysical challenges.

N: Following on from our conversation about nuclear weapons, what are your thoughts on biological and chemical weapons? The effects of these weapons are perhaps felt more personally than nuclear weapons, but I think they still present the same terrible ethical dilemmas.

D: Yes, I think they are more liberal. Nuclear weapons are more direct but very, very poisonous as well. I think that the logic of modern war is based on the idea of causing maximum loss while minimising the external aspects of the attack or aggression and that is the opposite of traditional war. So, we can barely remark on it, but it causes maximum loss. Chemical weapons, biological weapons are worse and more advanced technology because they kill without notice. Nuclear weapons are similar. So, the logic or so-called 'progress' of these weapons is not more lethal, but more inhuman and more dishonest. I think that there are real weapons, i.e. male weapons, they are carried in front of you, they menace you, they attack you, and they frighten you. But you can stay in front of them, fight back, assault them, and these are ethical weapons. But chemical weapons, biological weapons, nuclear weapons and air power (a little bit) are much more like female weapons as you do not notice them and they do not create this kind of male aggressiveness, but at the same time the losses are much more terrible. So, that is the *indirect way to kill*. And I would say that they are totally immoral, as technological weapons and progress are. They represent an accumulation of immorality. And I think biological weapons and chemical weapons as well, maybe, can be used as intellectual weapons, promoted through the networks of influence and mass media on the psychological level and are much more immoral and inhuman. I am against all of this process. In my opinion the rifle is the beginning of this process because the distance is too long, and the distance between having a rifle and not having a rifle is too big and is inhuman. So, I prefer the sword, I prefer knights fighting against each other in a polite

manner, killing each other in a polite manner, and in a male way; attacking the other, destroying the forces of the enemy in an ethical and chivalrous way. And from this moment, from the end of the Middle Ages, there was an accumulation of the lie in the weapon. I think that chemical weapons and biological weapons are a kind of terminal station of this process of killing in an asymmetric way. And that is why terrorist groups try to possess them, in order to strike back and to use these immoral weapons against immoral people who use them on a global level — it is a strike back. But I think that all these aspects are precisely part of the metaphysical process of alienation of technological progress or development, and that is alienation from 'being'. We destroy the other not when we use chemical weapons or biological weapons, but when we create them, when we spend money to organise laboratories or scientific centres or when we think about the necessity of something like this. *The problem is inside of our brain, in how we deal with 'being', and the development of a weapon as the destructive aspect of a tool*. I have no confidence in a tool. I think we need to deal with 'being', with other entities, human or non-human beings, and with all our organism and all our body we should be involved in dealing with reality. And when we put something between ourselves and reality, we start the alienation process. Indeed, chemical weapons and biological weapons are the logical conclusion and consequence of this process. So, they are more immoral than nuclear weapons, and nuclear weapons are more immoral than air forces and bombing, because these as well involve the killing of people who cannot strike back and cannot defend themselves. Aerial bombing is awful, but chemical weapons and biological weapons are more awful. But before aerial bombing, a little bit less immoral were tanks for example, and before them rifles and automatic weapons. So these were all part of the logical steps in this embedded process of alienation and destruction. We cannot limit them, we cannot for example say 'let one side have it and the other not', because the other will acquire it, will steal it sooner or later. So, proliferation of any kind of weapon is inscribed inside the weapon itself. We cannot stop it. And we cannot prevent terrorists representing minorities (oppressed or feeling themselves oppressed) against acquiring them by some means. But the guilt is not theirs, it is ours. The people creating them are guilty and not those using them because using them is the next step.

N: Let's turn to a concrete example, the recent 'alleged' chemical attack in April in Douma, Syria. What are your thoughts on this?

D: I made my enquiries and I am absolutely sure that it was staged by the White Helmets and it was a kind of element of the new turn in the Cold War against Russia; it was staged just like the 'Skripal case'. It is absolutely clear now, we have all the evidence but nobody wants to hear us precisely because it was willed by the West in order to blame us and to continue the pressure on Russia and on Putin. So, there was no reason for either case, because the politics, steps and measures of Putin are following

some sort of logic, he is not an absolutely crazy, mad man who by his own will is aggressive towards everyone. He is completely reasonable in his policy, perhaps even too shy, I would say. And there is no possibility that in Russia before the inauguration, with elections going on, and before the World Cup, Putin would give the permission or order to do that: it is excluded from any point of view. And Assad could not use them precisely because we have won in Ghouta and we have destroyed the opposition. So, strategically there was no reason to use them. But for those,who were losers in this situation in Syria, in order to change the balance in the Middle East, there was a reason to blame Russia, to stop us, and to put international pressure on us under any pretext. And as far as I know in the Skripal case, that was a very bureaucratic decision signed by Theresa May herself because there are some shadow zones in Western society, like Blackwater and other groups, MI6, MI5 and CIA, who can sometimes act on their behalf. In Network Warfare there is the concept of 'commander's intent'. There is 'commander's intent' to cause Russia trouble and they are not following a formal order but they are doing something maybe outside of the law but generally following the same line as the main politicians want. But in the Skripal case this was not such a situation, rather it was planned and organised with the formal agreement of Theresa May…

N: Sorry, how do you know this?

D: By some means… and that is why many awkward aspects of the situation appear, but nobody will pay attention to them, because they follow the general plan of the West. In the case of a shadow operation there is a long death, and they can be sacrificed. But when bureaucrats and a Prime Minister take such decisions they need to be very careful, so they staged this operation and it was awkward precisely because they tried to save everybody. The problem now is with the daughter. Skripal will be put in the Witness Protection Programme, as far as we know he is not in England anymore, he is in the United States and so we will never see him. The problem is with the daughter, because she doesn't follow and doesn't want to follow all the demands, because she is a Russian citizen. So, that is the problem now that the British government has to solve somehow. But this has nothing to do with any kind of chemical weapon.

N: So, you don't think any chemical weapon was used then? And you don't believe the OPCW report?

D: Everything is staged.

N: Including the OPCW report on the Skripal case?

D: Yes, yes but one is so contradictory about Novichok, it is a pure post-modern situation. You know that in the British TV series of 'Strike Back' Novichok was mentioned after years of total silence, and an evil Russian had Novichok in order to poison everybody and to give it to each separatist and so on. And secondly, the so-called 'Novichok' was used two days after the Russian traditional holiday called Novichok, i.e. the first of March is called Novichok. So, everything about the situation

is purely staged and based on an Ian Fleming story that is totally post-modern. And all the points about the cats and guinea pigs and the other poisoning are all contradictory according to the expert analysis of Russian specialists. So it was completely false…

N: But, the Russian specialists haven't had full access to everything that has happened, so it is difficult for them to know for certain. And there is one British theory that this could have been perpetrated by a rogue element in Russia, and the motive was either to cause trouble for Putin's upcoming election, or to cement his support by encouraging everyone to unite in fortress Russia in the face of an aggressive foreign threat. Perhaps these are two possible rational motives?

D: Absolutely not rational, I don't accept them.

N: And the Syrian case, you think that was just staged by the White Helmets?

D: Yes, and we have a lot of proof for this. We brought witnesses to Brussels and nobody seemed to notice this. So, we have explained everything with the Syrians and with witnesses, with people from Ghouta, with the persons used in this staged operation by the White Helmets, but that went against the general narrative. It was informational warfare, nothing else. From time to time we do some things worthy of blame so I don't affirm that we are completely innocent, but in these two cases we are absolutely innocent and we have nothing to do with them. But we have something to do with other things…

N: Which things?

D: Maybe we are hiding them too well, and so the West is obliged to imagine something that we didn't do, as it is incapable of finding what we really did. I know of some situations perhaps not of the same scale, for example concerning the death of Russian people fighting in Syria. There was no clear case, for example, no heroic act and completely innocent Russian victims. And that is the reason why we denied recognition of real loss, because there was a real loss. So, there was informational war from our side. So there are some things. We don't say the truth always, sometimes we hide something, sometimes we are obliged to lie, but not in these cases.

N: So, in both of these cases you say that Russia is definitely not to blame?

D: Absolutely, definitely.

N: And you have firm information on this; what are your sources? Are they 100% reliable, would you say?

D: I am sure that they are. And precisely because they are absolutely sure, I can not disclose them. For example, because I am considered to be an important speaker on Russia I have some access to the real situation, not to secrets, but when there is something they could say. I do not insist on some cases. I will not betray my country. I'm not trying to be fully objective, as it is impossible. So, I try to follow some rules in order to be credible because, for example, Zakharova or Lavrov are obliged to say things in defence in any case, but for an intellectual figure like myself it is not my duty. I

follow the main line but I have a very large space of personal opinion. I criticised Putin's decision to stop the defence of Donbass in Ukraine in 2014. I am not unconditionally engaged. I understand what 'We-group' is and the rules, but I try to be more balanced, I would say. That doesn't mean I have no position, I have a position.

N: And what is your position?

D: My position, for example, corresponds to the general features (about 70%) of the foreign policy of Putin. And I am 70% against his domestic policy; I think it is awful. And when it comes to the 30% of international politics that I don't agree with, that is the difference between me and Lavrov or Zakharova: I say my opinion. I have a kind of field of responsibility that is broader, but at the same time they reduce more and more my involvement in the inner politics because I am a non-conformist, and because I am against 70% of what Putin is doing on the domestic level, and I am not hiding that. That is a kind of balance.

N: Are you still formally advising on strategy and foreign policy? Do you still have influence on these levels?

D: Obviously some influence; for example my book *Foundations of Geopolitics*[4] is working more than I am, as well as other books and the articles that I have written. So, I have experienced these personal contacts in the intellectual way in Russian society and this has a very small impact on politics. When I am speaking with important people, we tend to speak about the weather, friends, parents, families, or about the Church or some philosophical aspects. But very rarely do we discuss strategical issues. They are prepared in a different way, by text, context, or plagiarism. There is some inclination in Russian society to steal everything. I have discovered this as a kind of paradigm of promotion of ideas. For example, there is a specific method to promote ideas in the United States or in Great Britain, in France or Germany. But in Russia you can put your text in open source and pretend you have forgotten about its existence, and it will be multiplied and put on Putin's table immediately with other names beneath. So you should choose either your own personal income, position, authority and respect, or influence. I have chosen many years ago to go for influence and effectiveness. And now I see how smart that was, because if everybody steals, let them steal because if you live by stealing, you have no time to imagine anything, and it is much easier to take something already prepared. And I am investing my time and my force in creating these internal concepts, projects, analysis, daily reports, and just not following where they eventually end up. So, it is open source strategy, open source Eurasianism, I would say. Open source Eurasianism allows people to take it without citing or blaming me. For example, recently I met in London an ex-minister of Portugal, Bruno Maçães[5] , a very smart and very brilliant man who recently wrote a book called *The Dawn of Eurasia*, and Maçães said that now he is in contact and friends with Sergey Karaganov — a man who, he said, is much more radical than I am in defending Russian imperialism and

empire against the West. But, Karaganov was a communist, soviet, Komsomol leader in the 1980s, when I was an anti-communist. Then later he became an absolutely pro-liberal, globalist, purely Western, hegemonic member of the Council of Foreign Relations in the United States and Chatham House; the most global, hegemonic, Atlanticist structures. And now, when the situation has changed, he has started to be more radical than I am. So, that is how I influence politics. And I presume Karaganov hated me in the 80s, 90s and now in the same manner. He is following his own personal career, and he is very smart and effective in that. And I am following a completely different strategy. I am following history and national interests and global civilisational interests, and I need to sacrifice, I cannot unite both. So, either you are an expert and keen on stealing or you concentrate on metaphysical truth, which might give some result that you are unaware of. You should follow the truth and find it in the way it is, and not in a way that seems more convenient or brings you more acknowledgements and position in society; and that is sincere. So, it is interesting that everybody changes, but I change my position only slightly.

N: Indeed, you seem to have been rather consistent over the years.

D: Absolutely, from the beginning in the 1980s I was against communism and against liberalism. In the early 80s when I was eighteen years old, I discovered traditionalism, conservatism, and Russian tradition. And I have stayed in that same position, against communism and liberalism. But I am supporting Putin precisely because I see something very similar and not just because he is in power. For example, I was against Medvedev and I criticised him openly and very radically; I didn't agree with him, despite the fact that he was President. I had no idea of trying to make my career in that way, but rather quite the opposite, I succeeded in making enemies at the highest levels of our society, because they didn't correspond to what I thought was true, necessary and good. And that was a long story; it's not like today. I am already old enough politically, I am as old a politician as Putin is. Putin has twenty years of real politics, serving Sobchak was not politics, it was bureaucracy and serving as a KGB man was normal, it was bureaucracy, state administration, but politics is a decision, a decision that could cost much if it goes against the majority or the will of the powerful. Politics is risky and dangerous. Putin has been taking risks for more or less the last twenty years, and I have been taking risks for twenty years or more.

We ended our conversation there, but later on that day we briefly took up the political thread again.

N: It seems to me that in politics you tend to have more of a long term approach. Is that a fair assessment? For example, in spite of the Brexit vote, in the short to medium term geopolitically there is not much option for Britain to fundamentally change its foreign

policy in the way you would desire, particularly as Theresa May has so closely aligned herself with Trump and is having such difficulty in the Brexit negotiations.

D: Yes, but maybe I am ahead of events. We need to prepare today what will come tomorrow. If we are only following behind events and their logic, we will always be reactionary.

N: Sounds like Fernand Braudel to me and his concept of *la longue durée*, i.e. the long periods of history.

D: Yes, yes, absolutely, and that is typical geopolitics. Geopoliticians can predict very, very, very detailed events but they never know when they will happen, because there are long term considerations. So, on the essential level Brexit changes everything, and demands a new role for Great Britain. But I think in Britain there is no sign of understanding this. And that understanding will take time, as the future doesn't arrive immediately. The future begins in the past, and we are living in the past of post-Brexit history. But the past is not unrelated to the present. So, the past is preparation for the present and the present is key for the future. Brexit is as well as Trump. Trump was elected and that was the preparation of an important age in world history, but after the first appearance of this completely new era that was almost put back, there is a kind of Bush Jr. politics there. But what happened before that was much more of the future. So time is not so linear as it appears.

Following on from geopolitics our conversation turned to more general topics.

N: And yet Israel is the home of the Holy Land, so you have to visit it.

D: Yes, yes, it is holy land but on another level of reality, it is situated not in concrete society, but something transcendental so we need to make an abstraction of everything. I didn't like Israel too much. But Turkey is completely different, as was Syria before the war. I was in Syria before the war or just when the war started, and they were very secure, very friendly, very much similar to Turks and not much like the other Arab states. Syria was modern, secular, open, very polite, a very, very friendly society. It is transformed now into a total war-zone, chaos. But Damascus and Aleppo were beautiful and peaceful cities.

N: Well, they are ancient, aren't they, and full of fascinating history and culture.

D: Yes, yes. It is not natural for them to fight.

N: Turning to a slightly different topic, I recently saw that Putin had a new car for his inauguration; I heard that it was Russian. Do you know what type of car it was?

D: I don't believe in Russian cars. I prefer not to drive Russian cars.

N: I don't know if you have come across it, but there is a very famous British car show called *Top Gear*.

D: Ah yes, yes.

N: They once did a programme where they tried to find out if the Soviet Union ever made a decent car. From what I recall, I think the answer was no.

D: Yes, *Top Gear* is very funny, very special and very thin, and has a very British sense of humour. And the anchors are excellent. As well as the two guys that were in Monty Python.

N: Ahh, so you enjoy the classics of British comedy like Monty Python?

D: Yes, yes. Monty Python was very funny as well.

N: What are the classics of Russian comedy?

D: Oh, I don't know now because I think that modern Russian comedy is not funny at all. I cannot understand it, neither the people who make it, nor those who watch it. So, it is outside of my understanding. And not because I have no sense of humour. I understand, for example, British comedy but Russian comedy not at all; I don't understand anything in it. It is a disaster, they try to make a joke but without any success. And Russian culture is very ironic, almost everything we say is ironic and that is not reflected in the special comedy culture, maybe precisely because our life is based on irony and thus it cannot be shown in a particular segment. But during the Soviet times there were comedians, some were funny and others not so funny, but at least there were some.

N: So, you understood the logic of the Soviet comedians?

D: Yes, at least. To my taste they weren't so funny but at least there were some efforts to make something. And now it is disastrous, disastrous. Some monsters exposing their innate inability to say something really, really funny. So, it is disastrous, a catastrophe.

N: Why do you think that is? Why is there no comedy?

D: I have no idea, I don't know. There is something wrong with us, now I feel it more and more. Something wrong in our culture and education. We have lost some line somewhere during Putin's period. In the mainstream it is normal and everything generally is more or less good, but the problem is in the details, any element is totally corrupted. In our society there are interesting poles. For example, exactly the same percentage (about 75% of the whole population), the same people and individuals who support Putin, the same people hate the government, and this is totally irrational.

N: Indeed, I see the contradiction.

D: Yes, because Putin is a kind of father figure, the archetype, and the government is a purely rational institution and we are far more devoted to archetypes than to rationality. The majority of people are against the present political system, the decisions, the government, capitalism, oligarchy, corruption, absence of fairness and justice in society — almost against everything. But at the same time, the same majority is in favour of Putin, our father, leader, our head. So it is a kind of bipolar disorder.

N: But this is something that has run throughout Russian history, the common refrain: the Tsar, the heavenly father, it is not his fault, if only he knew what was happening, he

would help us.

D: Yes, absolutely the Tsar is good, but the Boyars are bad, evil.

N: It is a continuation of that to some extent, isn't it?

D: Yes, yes. That is the Byzantine spiritual tradition of the Katechon, so we cannot judge the Tsar with a human attitude. But at the same time we are not idiots and we understand that everything is going badly. So it is not unconditional admiration of everything that the powerful do; there is a critical sense, there is rationality, there is basic calculation. But there is no direct link between our rationality, the cycle of rationality that is against the government, for example, and the cycle of adoration, admiration and glorification of the Tsar; two parallel visions of society. And that is interesting because Putin is not such a strong leader because of his own merits. He is a strong leader because we want to see him as such, we oblige him to be so. It is much more of a demand by us than his imposition on us.

N: But then how do you explain the relatively weak leadership of Yeltsin and Medvedev?

D: Yeltsin was supported precisely by this force, but when he started to show his weaknesses and went against Russian glory and was taken hostage by the oligarchs, he was no longer the Tsar. In the beginning he was considered as a Tsar, but when the people discovered that he could not or did not want to play the role of the Tsar and that he was taken hostage by boyars (who are evil oligarchs), there was disillusion, and great deep disappointment with him. Medvedev was chosen by Putin to be the person, the individual that could not fit our demands. So, he wasn't the Tsar, he was a caricature, and that is precisely why he was chosen in order to be the worst president possible, in order to keep the place for Putin. Someone a little bit better could easily replace Putin. Putin is not so good at all. At least he is satisfying some demands on the level of external image, but someone a little better than Medvedev could replace him. Medvedev is a stupid fool, a completely unsympathetic person; he is the worst of the people surrounding Putin. So if Shoygu or Lavrov or almost anybody else were put in power, Putin would never come back.

N: Is Putin's rule really that tenuous?

D: Yes.

On the way to our next interview location at a local Moscow park we engaged in some scattered but interesting conversations.

D: …ahh, this is the park I lived near from when I was four years old up until twenty, all of my childhood.

N: I wonder if we can find the places you used to play in.

D: Maybe, but I rarely remember my childhood. I'm not so much nostalgic in that sense. I prefer to think about other things…The paths that lead nowhere or *Holzwege*, that is the name of one of Heidegger's most famous books.

N: In such a place as this, I always think of Dante's 'Midway upon the journey of our life, I found myself within a forest dark' from the beginning of his *Inferno*.

D: Yes, the *Inferno* of Dante. But I dealt with Milton in my book.

N: You mean your book on the English Logos?

D: Yes, yes, I consider Milton to be very important in this kind of change of Logos because the Logos of traditional German and European culture is classical and Apollonian, and there was a very, very permanent shift over to the other kind. And Celtic culture played a very important role in that shift because it is much more inclined towards the Logos of Cybele. And so Celtic identity and German identity provided the foundations of the fight between Red and White Dragons from the beginning of England. So, German/Anglo-Saxons against Brits and Celts, and that was a very important cultural opposition that transformed politics and culture and it is very interesting to follow the traces of both of them and see how they are intertwined. For example, during Cromwell's genocide of Ireland, the White Dragon attacked the Red Dragon, but during the Stuart period, that was the revival of the Red Dragon with all this mystery of the sea, which is Celtic and Irish. At the same time there was a contradiction between the Anglo-Saxon Church, the Celtic Church and Catholicism. In the case of the Celts there was a balance which was reflected in the culture, ideas, philosophy, poetry, and art of England. I am calling this *historial* following Corbin's translation of Heidegger in French. We have already spoken about this?

N: Yes, we did last time, as I remember.

D: *L'historial* is an ancient French word to describe something historical and substantive; it is the semantic consequence of meanings, and not of facts. And I was trying to establish this consequence of meanings in British Logos and British history. Milton's interest and sympathy for the devil was much more a feature of Celtic culture, with the feminine aspect of reality and a kind of attraction to Hell. And this Logos was slowly directed against the much more heroic, solar and heavenly German and Anglo-Saxon, and little by little there was a kind of mixture, but not synthesis, between the two Logoi because the problem was not solved. For example, the balance between Celtic and German was more or less achieved in Switzerland, but in Great Britain this problem continued without being solved.

N: Speaking of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, there is a very famous scene where God halts the arms of the Archangels Michael and Gabriel so they cannot vanquish Satan. Why do you think he did this? Why did he allow Satan to live?

D: Because evil is a necessary part of 'being'. The metaphysics of 'being' is the passage of the infinite to the finite. And this limitation of creation is already a step

towards evil. From this limitation starts a diminution of the good, which is evil. So, evil is inscribed in manifestation. And evil is necessary, absolutely necessary for all limited forms of being. Only an infinite being has no evil inside. If we have a finite being, we need evil. So the victory over evil can be possible only in the relative sense. We cannot, we should not hope for absolute victory over evil and conserve reality and/or the world. So, when there is evil, there is the fight against evil and reality. When there is the devil, victory over the devil is always possible. But once fully achieved, there is no world in the normal sense. Reality without evil is inconceivable. So, I think that victory was granted only in a relative way. If we try to destroy the devil, we are trying to destroy the world. If we try to conquer the devil, we are trying to save our souls, and that is absolutely legitimate, to conquer the devil, but not destroy him, because he is inherent, he is the foundation of reality. In Greek mythology the world is based on the victory of the gods over the Titans, but the Titans were not destroyed; they were put in their place, in the lowest part of the world. And the world is based on the shoulders of the Titans. So, our world is based on the shoulders of Satan. And we should try to conquer him, with the angels, and we should participate in the struggle.

N: Is war sinful in your opinion?

D: It should be. In order to have a moral dimension you should have some space, some distance between sin and goodness, between beautiful and terrible things, between God and Satan. That is, both limits are necessary. So, the world is not evil, it is based on the overcoming of evil. The world is good but without evil it loses its reality, it cannot be real, and that is why the victory of Satan is irreversible. We should leave to the devil what belongs to him. And his position in Dante's Hell is very central, he marks the lowest limit, the lowest border of reality. And without this limit, without this border, there can be no order in the universe.

N: But what about Holy War and how it has been practiced over the centuries going back to 1095 when Pope Urban II gathered the bishops together at Cluny and launched the Crusades, a type of armed pilgrimage to the Holy Land to take back the sacred lands, especially Jerusalem. And then in our own times, the Islamic idea of 'Jihad'. What are your thoughts on both the Christian (Catholic) conception of Holy War, and the Islamic conception of 'Jihad'?

D: I think that Holy War is the conscious participation of the being on the side of God. There is a deep explanation for that, some deep reason, because up to a certain moment we should all choose our camp. If we don't choose this camp ourselves, someone will choose this camp for us, instead of us, and that will be a kind of violence against us. But I think that Holy War is the root of any war, so any war for any sacred goal is holy and any war at its root, at its origin, is holy. I understand very well the Islamic tradition. I understand very well the Crusades. And I think that a deep Christian world vision, based on the Orthodox spiritual tradition, is based on war. But this war in

the case of Orthodox Christian monks is mostly inner. And in Islam as well there is an inner 'Jihad' and an exterior 'Jihad'. They are not in contradiction. I think in Catholicism, the Crusades were an exterior Holy War and there was a kind of spiritual Holy War inside, an inner Holy War. And in the case of Orthodox Christianity, Holy War is mostly inner. We have no such concept as a Crusade or Holy War, or Jihad in Islam. Our Holy War is mostly inner; that is, the war that happens in the heart. However, that doesn't mean that we are very peaceful, but we prefer to be left alone in order to engage in our inner war because that is the ideal for the monk of Orthodox Christian Tradition. And the monk is Christ's warrior. And he is fighting the most terrible, most serious, and most difficult struggle: the struggle with himself. In our tradition, Holy War is essentially interior. But, for example, to defend the sacred Motherland of Russia is as well a sacred duty. So, for example, for us the victory in the Second World War was considered holy.

N: In what sense? So, there is God and the eternal immaterial world and then there is material earthly life, how can you join the two together? This was the idea of the Crusades that holiness became material, it became something you could see; that is, Jerusalem, the Holy Land.

D: We had a different concept, which is not purely spiritual but also material in our sense. In the Orthodox Christian tradition, an empire is not only in the material world, but it is a kind of reflection, a mirror, of the eternal heavenly kingdom. And the status of the empire, the ontology of empire and emperor is to be a Katechon; that is, to be a kind of obstacle to Satan invading the world. It is a defence of the border, a defence of the fortress, and the empire was considered to be a holy fortress in the path of Satan, and to fight and die for the empire was considered to be a religious duty that was not egoistic, that was not material in the sense of gathering more objects and accumulating riches, but the idea is/was the sacred. It is sacred to defend the material manifestation of the heavenly kingdom, that is precisely the Byzantine understanding of the empire. And after the fall of Constantinople, according to the Russian Orthodox tradition, the place and the function of the Katechon — Empire and Emperor — shifted to Russia. And that is the idea of Russia as the Third Rome, and so the defence of Russia is a holy duty, a sacred duty. But in a pure sense this Holy War takes place in the heart of the monk, and is inner. But the defence of empire is what we could call a lesser jihad, or in our sense it is as well a holy duty and a Holy War.

N: The idea of the 'Third Rome', if you accept this as a title for Russia, has always puzzled me when people use it to refer to the Soviet Union, because before you come to the communist period the Holy Tsarist Empire was destroyed and Orthodoxy was banned, so why doesn't this constitute the fall of the Third Rome of the Holy Tsarist Empire just as the First Rome fell in 476 AD when the German barbarians finally overthrew the Roman Emperor?

D: Yes, Soviet communism and Stalinism were a kind of secularisation of this concept of the Orthodox Christian Holy Empire. Everything was put in the context of materialism in a purely modern vision of the world. But the roots of communism were sacred and Nikolai Berdyaev, a Russian religious and political philosopher of the beginning of the 20th century, has explained this very well. On the surface Bolshevism was completely profane, secularised, modern and materialist. But the interpretation of Bolshevism and communism in Russian culture and society was very archaic and that was a kind of parallel ideology. So, in the eyes of the Soviet people, the Soviet Union was a new version of the Muscovite Third Rome. And it was very symbolic when the Bolsheviks moved the capital of the Soviet Union back to Moscow from St Petersburg. St Petersburg is not holy in our vision, but Moscow is — Moscow is the Third Rome, not St Petersburg. St Petersburg is the capital of the secular state, and Moscow as the Third Rome is the capital of the spiritual empire.

N: Some might call that pure sophistry, which could no doubt be used in a similar fashion by other clever philosophers in order to maintain that the First and/or Second Rome never fell either. In the Soviet case simply with the formal and explicit rejection of God and the Church's leading role in society, how can it still maintain its status as the Third Rome? And how can Moscow, the famous capital of an atheist state (the Soviet Union), still be considered a religious centre?

D: Communism wasn't what it appeared to be. It profoundly misunderstood its own essence. The real mystery of communism was not only the mystery of the iniquity or the destruction of traditional society, that was part of it, but at the same time the Russian people conceived the realisation of the eschatological promise that when God has entered inside of society it was a kind of Third Kingdom as prophesied by Joaquín de Fiore, the empire of the Holy Spirit has entered into matter. There was no more transcendence as in previous periods of the Father and the Son. So, that was something eschatological and I suggest reading Andrei Platonov's works about this. It is clear in his writings how some part of the Russian people interpreted communist materialism and atheism not in the materialistic Western sense — as liberalism or modern Western society, but there was a special immanent sacredness. So, only the transcendental aspect of religion was abolished, but there was the other side, maybe a little bit satanic, but in the Russian sense.

N: What do you mean by satanic in the Russian sense?

D: There was not a real materialist materialism, there was a sacred materialism, and sacred materialism can be interpreted as something very, very dangerous.

N: What is sacred materialism?

D: It means when there is no rational attitude towards material things and objects, but rather a kind of mystery that is inside of matter, a spiritual condensation of the spirit into matter, something that is hermetic. So, you are dealing not with material things in

profane accumulation, but you think that there is a sociological dimension in matter. You try to find salvation in matter, but in sacred matter, in Russian matter. That is not nature, that is something more. It is a kind of special sacred dimension of immanent reality, which appears in the Marxist narrative, but interpreted in the special Russian eschatological and very mystical spirit.

N: Following on from our previous topic, what do you make of the Islamic State and its 'Jihad'?

D: The Islamic State is at ease in Syria or Iraq, and it appears to be a simulacrum. It is not Guénon's Islamic sacralisation of politics. I think that the Shia concept is real sacred politics. So, putting together Holy War, sacredness and politics is much more represented in the Shia understanding/interpretation of politics. But, I think that in Islam there is this concept, this notion to unite spiritual war and politics. I think that the Islamic State is a kind of caricature, maybe organised artificially, in order to discredit Islam.

N: By whom do you think?

D: I think the West.

N: Sorry, you think the West created the Islamic State? Why does it fight against it then?

D: Absolutely, it is almost certain, because in the 1960s, when there was a growth of pro-Soviet socialist tendency in the Islamic world, there was a tactic adopted by the West to support fundamentalism, because they were anti-communist and anti-soviet, for example, in Afghanistan. These were the reasons why the CIA and Brzezinski supported al-Qaeda and all this fundamentalism was used instrumentally. After the fall of the Soviet Union these Islamic forces, which were created and supported by the West in order to fight against pro-Soviet tendency, were abandoned a little, and so they turned against their masters. But there remained ways and means to orient and manipulate these forces a little but not fully. So, I think that Sunni fundamentalism is a kind of artificial simulacrum of political Islam. But for Guénon, political Islam is much more related to Shia. Nevertheless, I think that in all cases political Islam should not be treated as dangerous. It is dangerous, but we need to understand that this sacralisation of politics is something natural and important. The forms are different, but that was a kind of logical and symmetrical response to the ancient crusades or the modern crusades of globalism and liberalism, which were as well crusades but in a new form. So, if you try to impose on everyone human rights ideology and doctrine, in the belief that this is universal and that it will be the salvation of all humanity, it is a secular version of religion. Along with communism, it is just another secular version of religion, both have some common aspects.

N: In your view, is terrorism a legitimate form of war?

D: I think that, for example, in the case of the present day situation in the Middle East everybody calls any group that fights against their own respective interests a 'terrorist group'. So, for example, the 'defenders of democracy' in the eyes of the West are 'terrorists' in the eyes of Russia. And the 'terrorists' in the eyes of the West could be 'more or less legitimate representative of normal Islamic society' in our eyes. So, there is a *double standard of interpretation* that is embedded in the situation of 'We-group' against 'They-group'. I think that terrorists have explanations for their activity, but I cannot absolutely approve of these terrorists' acts in any case. Personally, I am against that, and morally I am against that, and I am against murdering innocent people, above all civilians. But in that sense, terrorist acts were also carried out by the West in Iraq, Yugoslavia, and Libya. So, in order to be objective we should blame everyone. We cannot, for example, blame one group for killing civilians and approve of the other one doing exactly the same thing. But in order to accept this understanding of who is a terrorist and who is not a terrorist, we should acknowledge multipolarity. So, we need to define the rules. When there is only one pole, the Western one, that pretends to define the rule, for example, that terrorists are those who are recognised as such by the West, that is not normal because that is a double standard's understanding of terrorism. So, I am against terrorism, but I am much more against a unipole distributing the name of terrorist. For example, when we were fighting with the terrorists in Chechnya, we were described in the West as 'violators of human rights'. While Chechnya was considered to be fighting a liberation war against Russian oppression, militarism and imperialism. So, in this case terrorist acts were approved. When we showed that they were terrorists and using terrorist methods against us, nobody paid attention to us because it was legitimate for their fight against their Russian oppressors. But, for example, when the same methods are used by people against the United States, they are called terrorists. So, I think it is very, very difficult to arrive at a mutual understanding of what is terrorism, and more than that, it is impossible in a unipolar world, because everybody who fights against unipolarity will be called and easily recognised as a terrorist, even without proving their guilt. So, I think that we cannot arrive at a fully agreed upon concept of terrorism in the present situation, because there is no stability. There is neither a unipolar world recognised by everybody, nor yet a multipolar world. So now the concept of terrorism is a suspended notion, with suspended meaning and everybody is trying to shift the meaning to its own side. We call 'terrorists' those who are fighting against us and our allies. And the West does exactly the same. But Islamic countries are considered by both as objects. So, we don't ask them, because they could have a completely different concept of what terrorism is. We think that they are too engaged. And we imagine that we are not so much engaged. We are engaged more than them. So using the term 'terrorism' is biased. The use of the term 'violence' is also biased. The using of the terms 'Just War' and 'aggression' are biased today because everything is

defined by the balance of power. For example, imagine international law if Nazi Germany had won the Second World War, it would certainly be different. The law is not something that is completely free from the balance of power. And the balance of power is the last instance that defines what is law and what is legitimate or not legitimate. There is no other solution for that. And the balance of power now in the present situation is not yet defined; we are in transition. Unipolarity, which now passes through a very, very difficult moment, may finally win and then the standards will be based on this unipolarity, but I don't think so; it seems that this is most unlikely. However, some groups in the West are continuing to globally promote the same agenda of unipolarity and globalisation. Meanwhile there is a multipolar world emerging, which tries to establish, recognise and fix in place multipolarity with completely different definitions of what crime is, what terrorism is, what is possible, what is legitimate and what is not. And that creates a kind of grey zone because there is a transition and we are not absolutely sure to what point we are transitioning. So, in Russian eyes that is a transition from the unipolar moment to the multipolar moment or maybe multipolar world. But it is not something that is given, something that we could take for granted; it is a process, we are going in that direction. And so our Russian understanding of what terrorism is and the Islamic understanding of what terrorism is, and the Shia understanding of how much America behaves as a terrorist state should be heard. That is a kind of sign, if we could hear the other. So that is one thing. If we continue to stay in this monologue regime, that is something completely different. And that is a key point, there could not be one universal definition of terrorism.

N: But in a multipolar world, doesn't it become even more complicated because then everyone legitimately has their own different idea of what terrorism is, and so how does one deal effectively with such a topic?

D: No, I think in a multipolar world, after a few talks, we could arrive at some definition and some more or less general rules based on the consideration of every participant; for example, that we are going to exclude the practice of killing civilian children, acts of aggression, acts of taking hostages in any sense and in any civilisation. So, that is not a problem. Now all the concepts and notions of international law are the field of this confrontation, of this semantic war not only in terms of what is just or unjust, possible, unacceptable or acceptable, what terrorism is, what aggression is, but also the 'Blame Russia' concept is as well almost law. Blame Russia if you feel bad or sad, blame Russia if you have some problem with debt or some problem with the economy: blame Russia. So, that is maybe the last concept with which unipolarity is trying to save itself. For example, in the attack against Trump in the United States, having contacts with the Russian Embassy, or being inside RT or having contacts with Russian women, is also participating indirectly in terrorism, because you must blame Russia because Russians are 'evil aggressors and imperialists'. So something like that

is terrorism. If there are concepts that are used by one party against the other, there is a kind of symmetric answer. In Russia, for example, if you are in the opposition, you are pro-American; if you are pro-American, then you must want to destroy Russia and betray Russia. So, it is the same in Russian society. There is a similar 'blame Americans' mantra here in a way, but not to blame all Americans or the whole West. For example, I see no rational explanation why Russia banned the British Council; in my eyes, it is not so dangerous…maybe there's something I don't know, but in my eyes and in my humble opinion, it is not a spy organisation[6] . It is something cultural that is very useful and positive. But the logic of blaming Russia and blaming the West is not the way to achieve understanding and there is not now one 'We-group' against a 'They-group'; there is no bipolar situation, but there is a will not to let the multipolar world happen. Russia is not fighting only for itself for one simple reason: because we cannot afford anymore to be the second pole in a bipolar system — it is impossible, we have no resources and no capacity for this. So, we are obliged to defend Chinese truth, Islamic truth, African truth, Latin-American truth in order to find our place in the multipolar system. We cannot be a bipolar pole opposing the West. So, we have an existential need for multipolarity; it is not only a possibility, it is rather the only way for us to survive.

N: So, multipolarity for you is just a geopolitical strategy to enable Russia to survive and to weaken the West's control of the international system, is that what you are saying?

D: Multipolarity recognises some points of decision based on independent rationality with roots in a special civilisation. That is more or less Huntington's version, but not necessarily a 'clash of civilisations'. The clash of civilisations is misunderstood; it is not an invitation to clash… Huntington, as far as I understand, tried to stress the differences at the basic level, not the differences in zones of interest. So, the clash of civilisations is possible in the realist tradition when there is sovereignty, when there is freedom and where there is chaos in international relations. All these concepts are from the realist theory in international relations. The only difference between classical realism and the civilisational approach is precisely that we are dealing not with nation states (as in classical realism) but with civilisations. Civilisations are represented here as new forms of political unity. So, integration therefore is necessary; Eurasianist integration in our sense, Islamic integration in the case of Muslim society, or European integration, or African integration. We are dealing with great spaces, which are called 'civilisations'. So, the freedom or the subject of sovereignty is no longer in the nation state but in the civilisation. But regarding the clashes, there is a possibility of war but that is a basic principle of realism in international relations regardless of the kind of system. The new aspect in this multipolarity is that there are far fewer poles; that is, the poles are not as numerous as the number of nation states we now have. Nation states

recognised by international law are many, but only a few of them could aspire to sovereignty in the present situation in order to create a kind of pole which is independent and sovereign. They need to be united into some sort of supranational unity based on the common denominator of civilisation. That is why the European Union was created and what it is based on, and why, for example, Turkey isn't accepted inside, in spite of all the talk of economic and maybe political and juridical unification. Turkey certainly belongs to a different civilisation, to the Eurasian one. And I think that in the general sense, multipolarity is a kind of semantic plurality. Different civilisations have their own understanding of what *man* is or what *time* is, what *space* is, what *the universe* is, what *good* is, what *open* is, what *closed* is, what *human* is, what *gender* is, what *tradition* is and what *modernity* is. And in order to establish a multipolar world order, we need to hear everybody, every representative of all the civilisations, but not of just any country. However, within each civilisation as well there should be dialogue between the peoples and the traditions inside. So, that is a kind of summary of the multiplicity and diversity of the cultural multipolar world order. It is difficult to establish. It is much easier to just impose or project the system of values of one more advanced civilisation onto the others. But that is racism and that is precisely what is the weakest point of modern globalisation. It is not globalisation in the genuine sense: it is the projection of one part of humanity onto the whole of humanity. The Western part affirms itself as a kind of destiny and projects its own values (good or bad) onto the globe, onto the planet. Multipolarity fights against that in order to defend the right of other civilisations to have their own understanding of the essential aspects of everything; for example, regarding terrorism, war, holiness, history, and who was wrong or who was right, for example, in a particular historical moment.

We broke for lunch. But, shortly afterwards on a walk through a memorable park for Alexander, we continued our geopolitical and philosophical discussion.

D: …Perspectivism recognises that there are as many realities as there are points of view or phenomenological perceptions, because perception is not only a reflection of what exists; perception is at the same time a *creation* of what exists. I would say, not what *is*, but what *exists*. So, there is a kind of phenomenological approach. And relativism thinks that there is a reality that nobody understands, but there *is* reality and only parts of it can we consider. But phenomenology or perspectivism is a kind of positive value of the consciousness that is not so much subjective, but phenomenological… The subject is the centre of civilisation; that is, a kind of brain of civilisation. But there are so many objects around it. And the problem is how to deal with other civilisations as with other subjects; to recognise the right of others to be a

subject and that is precisely what happened to me when I was deprived of speaking with Brzezinski…

N: He would not recognise you as a subject?

D: Absolutely. I asked him whether he considered chess to be a game for two. And he said no, it is a game for one. So, this is the pure vision of unipolarity.

N: Have you tried to meet Brzezinski more recently and repeat this question to him?

D: No, no.

N: It was already clear?

D: Yes, absolutely. And I have read his texts.

N: *The Grand Chessboard*?

D: Yes, and other books, and I consider that is completely correct. There is no dialogue, there is monologue. You are an object: either you follow our orders or you will pay for it. We win, you lose — sign here. It is nice if you are dealing with that; everything is quite clear. So, if you can resist, you resist…

N: But, he doesn't seem to have that much direct influence on US power these days. I mean he hasn't served formally in any administration for decades.

D: In Russia, I think he has real influence because it is exactly as we see the West, and how and what the West is for us. He was one of the leading strategists of the Council of Foreign Relations and the Trilateral Commission; indeed, along with Kissinger he created the Trilateral Commission. In the 1960s, 70s, and 80s he was one of the leading figures and I think he is more than that.

N: In your view, who is the key geopolitical thinker now in the US?

D: I think that there are some odd authors, but I could not identify them personally. So, the tendency of speaking and thinking in this Atlanticist version, as Brzezinski explicitly did, is a kind of common agenda. If you know the language, you can read the book on language or you could read the grammar. Brzezinski was the author of the grammar and dictionary of Atlanticism. That wasn't a book as such, it was a grammar study. And if you study the grammar, you read texts where there are more difficult constructions. So, I think there is not so much geopolitical linguistics, as in the case of Brzezinski, because it is clear already. You have this dictionary; you can take it and use it. And when you are writing a book, you try not to imitate the dictionary You try to find something new and original. But for geopolitics that is bad, because you try to hide in geopolitics and not reveal and explain, so it becomes not an educational text but rather a text to hide or pervert or transform clear phrases. For example, there is a substantive, and so you try to embellish it or transform it, and that becomes poetry or rhetoric. Brzezinski and his logic are constants. You know the three laws of logic and that is enough; you shouldn't rewrite these three laws for the next generation. But the problem is whether you know or don't know these three laws. If you don't know, then everything goes further. But the peasants or the masses shouldn't necessarily know Aristotle or

Plato or Hegel, for example, and that is the problem of methodology, I would say. Brzezinski without Mackinder, without Spykman, without Mahan is quite incomprehensible, and we cannot understand what he wanted to say without knowing, for example, the concepts of *Land Power* and *Sea Power*. Of course, he was not the source of these, he was just a kind of sign of verification. So, if there is such clear and explicit (based on his Russophobia) confirmation of the freshness or existence of the three laws of Aristotle, then there is a logical tradition and there is not chaos, as some Western experts and foreign policy analysts try at times to expose. So, there is an individualist version, but there is the main access in the science of geopolitics. And it is a kind of science, and in a sense it is objective. It is not individual, it is not something that you could imagine at your will. Either you are following the rules of geopolitics or there is no geopolitics. But I think that geopolitics is the global agenda of Western strategic thought… right here is the pond of my childhood.

N: This one is?

D: All this chain of them.

N: Did you go swimming here at all?

D: A little…we always came here for sports lessons, for running and skiing. We didn't skate here. And when my son was born I walked with him here, when he was small, now he is 33 years old.

N: So, have you always lived in Moscow then?

D: Yes, I was born here.

N: I expect you have seen huge changes in Moscow over all these decades?

D: Yes, yes. But I think that the geopolitical and philosophical changes were much more profound than the exterior aspect of things. And going from communism to liberalism and to a form of nationalism these days is a very, very passionate experience when you understand something. If you don't understand something, you see only external things. And few people were prepared to follow these differences because communism signified not one version of thought, but rather a sort of the whole of thought. Communism was identified with thought itself. And when it ended nobody noticed because thought cannot stop and different thought was not considered possible in Soviet totalitarianism. So, that was very, very funny. The end of communism wasn't noticed by communists, so the passage to liberalism was not violent. It was as if nothing had happened at all.

N: But how do you think they really avoided violence? Surely, it must have been more than just this vacuum of alternative thought processes?

D: It was because of the deep idiocy of late post-Soviet society. During the first period of communism, Soviet society was orientated against the bourgeois, then during the middle period there was a kind of defence of socialism against capitalism, while the third and last period was a total fading of any form of political or ideological

consciousness. It was a kind of eclipse of thought and so the most important event passed without notice.

We reached a quiet spot with a pleasing view of a lake. Then after a short break we began our next discussion on strategic matters.

N: There is a famous British historian called Lawrence Freedman who talks about the essence of strategy. He believes that strategy all boils down to maintaining an effective balance between ways, ends and means. What, for you, is the essence of strategy?

D: Strategy is a luxury of historical subjects. Strategy can be created when there is free will based on independent and sovereign thought. But if there is no sovereign thought and no free will, you cannot create strategy; you will simply follow the strategy of some others. So, I think that strategy is based on these conditions. But to have sovereign thought and to have free will is not the beginning of history; it is a kind of end. If you have sovereign thought and free will, then logically you can create a strategy in order to reach the goal you are formulating. The problem of Russia is that Russia throughout many centuries behaved in a reactive way. The West had a strategy and Russia reacted against this strategy and this created the image that Russia had a strategy, because opposing the West or reacting against the challenges of the West were quite similar to having a strategy because it did not involve following someone, but opposing or creating something against the other. But the secret of Russia was that maybe it was a full strategy because Russia didn't have full independent sovereign thought and full free will. Reaction is an obligation to act in response or in answer to something or someone. So, the reaction of Russia was dissimulated or hidden behind this image of a sovereign imperial power.

N: So, what is Russian Grand Strategy? Does Russia even have a Grand Strategy?

D: That is the problem, that is the problem. Russia is a power that is half sovereign in its sense of thought and half free in its sense of will. Russia has no Grand Strategy but it is striving to have a Grand Strategy. First of all, Russia behaves reactively. But reaction is not Grand Strategy; it might be a Grand Reaction. And the purpose of this Grand Reaction is to destroy the Grand Strategy of the West. So, in that sense we are great. In that sense we are serious. And in that sense we are a grand obstacle, I would say, to the plans and strategy of the West. And this gives the impression that we have an alternative strategy, which is possible but isn't achieved yet. So what is the problem now with Russia? Putin's Russia projects the image of having a strategy. And Putin could be perceived from outside as a great strategist in the situation when it seems that the West lacks such a strategy. So, in confronting Putin's Russia and the modern West we could acquire a kind of image that there is a Russian strategy, but in reality that is not the case. In reality the West has a strategy.

N: What is the West's strategy? Because many in the West would say we have no Grand Strategy.

D: Absolutely, I hear that from the majority of Western experts, because the Grand Strategy of the West is a little bit unconscious, because the liberal attitude prevails in the West. And liberalism and grand projects and strategies do not sit very well with each other. So, you think that everything is defined by greed and the striving for security, and that these are the reasons and causes of the behaviour of Western society, and that there is no goal, because the goal is created by liberalism. But I think there is a great narrative of Western civilisation. I think there is a teleology and eschatology behind Western liberalism, capitalism and globalism. There is a goal to achieve. And it is precisely that strategy that was based on the free decision taken at the beginning of modernity and we are now in the last phase of the realisation of this great decision and Grand Strategy. The Grand Strategy is to transform all humanity into more or less Western society. As Fukuyama has described it: to install everywhere democracy, the market economy and liberalism; to destroy the nation states, races, religions; and to transform humanity into a global world, one world based on the mixture of populations, on purely individual identities, without borders, without differences between civilisations, and all culminating in a post-human future represented by singularity and artificial intelligence, and where technology is destiny. And that is the West's Grand Strategy. But this Grand Strategy now is encountering a kind of opposition and resistance from everywhere: from Islam in the political way, from Russia in the geopolitical way, from China in its special way of modernisation and liberalisation of the economy and the growth of population, which isn't compensated by the growth of democratic self-consciousness and so on. So, there are many challenges to this Western Grand Strategy. This Grand Strategy of the West is now confronted with a serious test. And in that sense, Russia appears as the force trying to destroy this Grand Strategy, but that is simply a reaction and is not an alternative strategy, because Russia doesn't recognise itself and its own destiny in the Grand Strategy of the West. So, it refuses to participate in this process; in globalisation, in individualisation, in so-called democratisation, and liberalism and gender politics and artificial intelligence. Russia's idea is to oppose something. But Russia in the present situation has nothing with which to oppose the West except the previous stage of that same Western culture. It is pure conservatism, there is no alternative direction of civilisation but the idea is to stop, to delay the process; that is, not yet, not now, not so soon, and not at such speed. That is the only message, and that is not a strategy. It is a kind of *anti-accelerationism*. That is not Grand Strategy. But, in order to subvert the Grand Strategy of the West, Russia behaves in a smart way. It not only refuses to follow blindly, but we try to imitate some of Western technology in order to oppose the West. We are trying to find a tactical solution to subvert this Grand Strategy, but this is still not an alternative strategy. But

what is interesting is that, because very few people in Russia fully understand what the Grand Strategy of the West is, a phenomenon described as Caesarism by Gramschi takes place; that is, we try to accept some aspects of the globilisation process, but at the same time we try to oppose full scale globalisation, so we are choosing some elements to accept and some elements to reject. What is interesting is that inside of this reaction and absence of Grand Strategy, there is a process of smart, inventive and creative subversion of the Grand Strategy of the West, where something different appears or may appear or can appear. And my book *The Foundations of Geopolitics* and all my activity from the beginning of 1990s are a continuation of the same effort. I have tried to understand the Grand Strategy of the West and to oppose this strategy with an alternative strategy. But this is almost an individual initiative; it isn't the idea of Putin or Russian society. I have tried to find the foundations of a reaction against the West not as a pure reaction or as the conservatives' 'not yet, not now, but later' or a kind of inertia, but a counter strategy. So I have accepted the concept of Land Power and Eurasia concept from classical Atlanticist geopolitics, and I have started to awaken the Russian subject. Eurasianism, from a Land Power point of view, treats Russia as the subject with sovereign thought and free will. And that is why from outside they identify me with Russia and Putin, but that is also why here in Russia nobody does that. Inside of Russia it is clear that the government and the Russian state have nothing to do with an independent sovereign strategy, but rather they pursue a purely pragmatic use of Western strategy without the loss of power. However, the West sees our country through Putin's 'Corporation Russia'. The alternative eschatological goal is represented in Eurasianism and the awakening of the Russian Orthodox Christian eschatological world vision. And that is the strategy. So we have a Grand Strategy but in this case it doesn't mean Putin, or the Russian state, or Russian society as such. It is a kind of ontological, historical and existential deep identity of Russia. It is the deep society or deep state at the same time. So, it is not the state, government or administration — it is the deep state. It is something that is permanent, almost an eternal constant behind all the differences and changes in the state and in society. There is something very Russian inside any Russian. But taken individually, a modern Russian is more modern than Russian. He is modern, he shares the same interests as Western European people, and he is not so Russian, except in maybe some details of behaviour. But there is something that makes a Russian 'Russian', and that is a deep identity, not a formal identity, but something that lies deep inside of us. I am trying to make a psychoanalysis of Russian history and society to get to the deep core of Russianness from the point of view of our history, culture and our deep identity, as well as in the sense of a logical strategy for our statehood. Eurasianist philosophers discovered that there was a continuity between Imperial Orthodox Russia and the Soviet Union; in spite of all the ideological differences, geopolitically there was a continuation. We have applied the same principle to democratic Russia, which

destroyed all its links with the Soviet Union, and again ideologically there was a completely different country, but geopolitically it was a continuation of the same. So, what was the same in Imperial Russia, in Stalin's Soviet Union, is also the same in today's democratic Russia. This is something that we are calling the *deep state*, and this was the core. And opposition to the West was the main feature in all of these periods regardless of ideological changes. So, there is something inside Russian people, inside the Russian soul, inside of Russian identity. If we put them together, we could construct the subject of this strategy based on sovereign thought and free will. So, it is a kind of work of imagination. It should be something like the Russian subject or Russian Logos; it is not quite clear what it is, but everybody in society and those who take serious decisions in the state have always to deal with such instances — instances which are not formal. So, I am calling it *Russian Dasein*, or maybe *Russian soul*, or *Russian identity* and this is precisely the centre of our Grand Strategy. This is not reactive because in this case our resistance against the Grand Strategy of the West is not based on pure reaction or trying to grant to some political elite some kind of independence and absence of control from outside, as is the case in the modern Russian state. We are fighting for something different, I would say, for a different end of history. Because there is the end of history in the liberal sense as Aleksandre Kojève and Fukuyama have described, but there could also be a Russian 'end of history' that is based on the eschatological expectation of Orthodox Christianity, and that is incompatible with unipolarity and globalisation. And this vision, this globalisation strategy, is the Antichrist. So, the West is under the influence of the Antichrist because this globalisation, liberalism, modernisation, enlightenment was considered as the historic process of the becoming of Satan. And Russia in that sense has a mission, as the Byzantine Empire had previously, to fight against the Antichrist. And that is not only reaction. If our mission is to fight against the plans of the antichrist to put all of humanity under his control, then we have a Russian Grand Strategy. And if we put together what Putin does after coming to power and this Grand Strategy (described as a Russian Katekhonic mission to oppose the Antichrist) then we receive something very, very similar. So, it is almost the same; Putin's reactive politics fits almost perfectly with this Grand Strategy. But inside of Russian society it is not so clear because you see Putin as the highest instance of bureaucracy, behaving in its own normal and corrupt way, and you see a Westernised population with almost the same interests as Western society, and you see the development of technology. So you can't see this mission inside Russia. And if there are people who are following my idea, they are a small minority, and they don't represent something serious. There are two types of minority: one minority corresponds to the essence while the other minority corresponds to the periphery. The central point of the circle is one point, and the point on the periphery of the circle is a point as well. But their point and my point are slightly different. I represent the core minority, people

from all levels of society — from the lowest up to the highest — who think likewise and work with the same terms and the same historical analysis. It is a minority including some in the elite, but this is a kind of shape of the subject of the Grand Strategy of Russia.

The spring heat was rather intense so we briefly paused our conversation and proceeded deeper into the park until we found a shady bower. From there we began to discuss Ukraine.

N: I would like to ask you a few questions now about the Ukraine crisis, specifically what you think happened, why did it happen and what role did you play in all this?

D: So, Ukraine is a very special geopolitical place. It is the border between two great spaces. On the one hand, there is the Russian-Eurasian space, and on the other hand there is the European space. And the identity of Ukrainian society reflects these two orientations. So, there is no Ukrainian people; there are two Ukrainian peoples. One people considers Western European civilisation to be the same civilisation as its own, and that the Eastern Russians from Moscow created their empire at the expense of Western Ukrainians. And there is the other part of the Ukrainian population that considers itself to be part of this Eurasian/Russian/Eastern Russian world. Both of them are Ukrainians because these lands from a certain historical period were called Ukraine, which means 'periphery'. And periphery has a double meaning, it is a periphery of Europe and is periphery of Eurasia and Russia. So, Ukraine is twice Ukraine, and two times a periphery, a periphery of the West and a periphery of Russia. And this is reflected in the name of parts of Ukraine, so there is Western Ukraine and there is Novorossiya, and Novorossiya was peopled by Eastern Russians. But afterwards Western Ukraine was divided between Austria and Poland, and after the Russian victory over the Turks, Crimea was added to Novorossiya. So, this space has a very special destiny because parts of this space belong to different political entities. And Ukraine as an independent state appeared for the first time in history in 1991. Before that, it didn't exist at all. And so this was the chance to create Ukraine. Ukraine from the beginning of 1991 possessed two poles or two identities. But the idea was to impose on this Ukraine a unique identity. Initially there was Leonid Kuchma's idea to make a balance between both of them, but nobody was satisfied by this because the Eastern Ukrainians wanted more Russia and the Western Ukrainians wanted more Western Europe. And so this balance was called multi-vector politics, but it satisfied nobody. And the challenge for the Ukrainians was to create a nation that didn't exist, and to organise and harmonise both identities, as in Belgium. So, in Belgium there was the German/Flemish, mostly Protestant, population and there was the Walloon French Catholic population; it's clear that there are two peoples and not one. So, there is one

state, one nation, but two peoples inside. And if you insist too much on one identity over the other you will split the country. And this was the same for the newborn entity of Ukraine in 1991. This happened not as a result of a historical struggle, but because of the broader context of the collapse of the Soviet Union. Geographically the Soviet Union was the same or almost the same as the Russian Empire, but it was based on other ideological principles. Ukraine didn't exist in the Russian Empire, but was part of its inconstant historical borders; that is, parts of Ukraine belonged before to Austria, to Turkey, and, before the division of Poland, — to Poland, and to Lithuania. But, the voting process of the electorate of Ukraine was split on the geographical level: the Eastern Novorossiya part voted always for an Eastern Ukrainian candidate, regardless of whether they were good or bad; and the Western Ukrainian electorate voted always for a pro-European candidate. And this was a tragedy because there was no unified identity; there were two identities. How could we theoretically solve this problem? One answer is either to split Ukraine, so the eastern part including Crimea could join Russia, or an Eastern Ukrainian state could be created, and a Western Ukrainian state could join the EU — that is one solution. The other solution is to create a national identity based on the recognition of both identities, as in Belgium's case. For example, we combine the Eastern and Western identities, maybe through federalisation or recognition or by other means. But these identities were contradictory. For example, for Eastern Ukrainians, Stalin and the Russian Tsars were heroes more than oppressors, while Hitler or Stepan Bandera or Hitlerian Ukrainian nationalists were absolutely evil. For Western Ukrainians it was quite the opposite; Stalin was the aggressor, Russian Tsars were imperialist figures and Hitler was a kind of liberator, because he came from the West. So, the Western and Eastern identities were unbalanced. I predicted in a different situation either the split of Ukraine with Novorossiya and Crimea joining Russia or the creation of two independent Ukraines, or the creation of a Ukrainian nation based on the recognition of both identities. And I was in contact with all groups; with Eastern Ukrainians, but as well with Western Ukrainians, because they were also anti-liberal, anti-globalist and so on. And after the Maidan there was…

N: Sorry, what do you think actually happened at the Maidan?

D: So, the Maidan happened because Yanukovich was perceived as an Eastern Ukrainian candidate, but actually he wasn't so much. He tried as well to unite both parts but with no success, because to create a nation is a kind of historical art. If you are lacking this ability, then corruption comes first and there is the destruction of this historical mission. So the mission was lost. But Yanukovich wasn't the first Ukrainian president to fail this mission, before him Yushchenko, Kravchuk, and Kuchma all failed, beacuse it was very, very difficult to provide a serious answer. And Maidan, in my opinion, was an artificial attempt to put Eastern Ukraine under the control of Western Ukraine. And the West who logically considered Ukraine to be its periphery pushed the

opposition groups to overthrow Yanukovich. There was no problem with Yanukovich personally because he was a very bad and corrupt person, and not absolutely pro-Russian, but rather he was considered a symbol of Eastern Ukraine. And during the Maidan it was clear that the Western Ukrainian identity revolted in Kiev over the Eastern Ukrainian identity. That was why we considered this as a challenge to Russia and when it became clear that Yanukovich was already overthrown, in my opinion, for Russia there was only one solution: to send Russian troops in to help Eastern Ukraine establish its own identity. The West was absolutely on the side of Western Ukrainians, and so we were obliged to defend our periphery with the Ukrainian people, with an open solution for the future. I was active in trying to move Ukraine closer to Russia in my dealings with both Eastern Ukrainians but also with Western Ukrainians, because many Ukrainian nationalists were friends of mine before the Maidan, and I tried to convince them to stay neutral, and to organise a Ukraine that was independent from both — from us and the West, and to accept the right of Eastern Ukraine to have its own identity; and they came here and we were in contact and we had very, very positive relations. But after the Maidan, which was pushed by the West and was a clear victory for Western Ukraine not over Russia, but over Eastern Ukraine, all contacts stopped. So, when this moment came, I proposed in my analysis and speech — nothing more — for Eastern Ukraine to be defended by Russian Forces because it was in danger. The Western Ukrainians had declared death to the Muscovites and so on. I wasn't so much happy with Crimea only because the idea was to liberate Eastern Ukraine from Western Ukraine in the case of confrontation, but not as such. There were previously different solutions, but I didn't insist on that. But when all this started, the only way was to separate them. Maybe in order to restore Ukrainian unity later on, but first of all we should grant Eastern Ukrainians the right of freedom and liberty to choose, a right they were deprived of by the Maidan regime. So, that was my idea and because I declared this publicly I was considered to be an instigator of the war and there was a logical geopolitical response…

N: I don't know if it was accurate, but it was certainly reported in the West that you used some very, very strong language. I think you are quoted as saying 'kill, kill and kill Ukrainians'. And then later US sanctions followed for the role you played in this crisis.

D: No, not Ukrainians. So, after the massacre at the Trade Union's House in Odessa, I was so appalled by the atrocities committed against innocent people from our periphery, who held a different opinion to the perpetrators, that I called for the perpetrators to be killed, and not Ukrainians. My actual phrase was 'Kill the killers', but not Ukrainians because Ukrainians were innocent, they were manipulated by the West. And this was taken out of context and after that there was a witch hunt against me. If you are interested you can consult the full speech, it is on the internet on open sources. But nobody wants to hear the actual phrase because it was not against the Ukrainians, but against the

killers. I said those words against those pro-Maidan nationalists who on the 2nd of May 2014 in Odessa, with napalm, burned the signature collectors for an Ukraine-wide referendum against the Maidan coup d'etat. My words were against those who deliberately set fire to the House of Trade Unions from the inside and killed the young people who jumped out of the burning windows right on the pavement, breaking their arms and legs and bodies. I spoke those words against those who pierced the belly of a pregnant woman with a knife inside Odessa's House of Trade Unions and then set her on fire. In my opinion, to kill the killers after perpetrating such an act is just; killing and at the same time filming the wounded people who jumped from the windows was a horrible, monstrous crime against innocent people and against humanity. And I was completely against that…

N: And you suffered personally because of this comment; I understand that you lost your job at Moscow State University?

D: Maybe yes, or maybe it was a coincidence. In order to discredit and demonise Russians, Ukrainians cut this phrase out of context and then made a petition to fire me. After this I resigned, so it was maybe a factor in my resignation, but not the direct cause. I myself resigned but there were certainly signs of pressure against me, but nothing radical.

N: But there are many terrible acts perpetrated in all sorts of wars over all periods of history, why did this particular incident in Odessa stir you so much that you felt you had to say 'kill, kill, kill'?

D: Because I am half-Ukrainian. My parents are from Poltava, in central Ukraine, and I felt it as a personal drama because it seemed that one part of myself revolted against the other. And all my heart was with the people of Novorossiya, and I saw that we were trying to help them in the beginning. But then Putin began to betray them, because after the reunification of Crimea it was almost evident that there was no strategy at all. The strategy based on sovereign thought and free will was to take all of Eastern Ukraine and establish control. What happened in Crimea was simply reaction; it was a clear example of the difference between reaction and strategy. Taking Eastern Ukraine was possible because there were popular revolts in Odessa, Kharkov, Nikolaev, everywhere, not only in the Donbass, although those in the Donbass were the most radical. And Moscow hesitated in accepting this or in helping them. They began by encouraging everyone but shortly afterwards Putin stopped this. And I couldn't accept that. For me this was a betrayal, and it was a betrayal not only for me. They began to say that there was a clever plan, that Putin would take them back, but now the question is only Donbass. In the beginning there was not only the question of the Donbass, the Donbass (Luhansk, Donetsk) is only a part of Novorossiya, but Novorossiya is half of Ukraine. This doesn't mean that we need all of this, but it is our periphery, which we need to defend. So, in my eyes, Crimea was a compromise; there was no strategy, there

was only reaction It is better than nothing but it is too little, and not full reunification of Novorossiya because we have declared parts of it as Russian and other parts as not Russian. But these other parts are Russian as well. For example, Crimea is not more Russian than Odessa or Kharkiv. So, we shouldn't behave in such a way. We should have had some moral consistency because we have betrayed parts of Novorossiya and we have annexed other parts of Ukraine. And after this we started to behave in Ukraine exactly as we do in Russia; by creating this corrupt, bureaucratic state with no idea and being reactionary and Caesarist. So, this was my great disappointment in Putin because Putin made a half step, but we have paid the full price for only half the result. We are under sanctions and we will be under sanctions until the end of time because we will never return Crimea and the West will never accept this as legitimate.

N: But why did the US go after you personally on their sanctions list?

D: I am very proud of this, to say the truth. And they went after not only me but my friends, who had nothing to do with this crisis and gave no material support for the fighting or violence, nothing at all. We are put under sanctions because, in the eyes of the Americans, we are responsible for what happened. And I can say that I am responsible for my country and for its strategy. I am sanctioned because I am a subject with independent and sovereign thought and free will, and because they identified me as being behind Putin. I don't know the quality of their intelligence, but while not criminel in the juridical sense, I think that I am fully responsible for supporting the return of our periphery or the defence of this periphery in the face of this other aggressive periphery. They have identified in my person a kind of symbolic bearer of Russian Logos; that and my geopolitical thought, as they have discovered that I wrote about this many years ago. And I had very good relations with many people who were important in Eastern Ukraine; they were my friends. But I never participated in the fighting there and I was never in Crimea. My role was only words, and I am sanctioned for my ideas. I consider that this is a recognition of the power of ideas. I always believe in this. Along with my friend Fukuyama, we agree on at least one point: ideas do matter. So, I'm sanctioned for my ideas, and this is a good way to appreciate the power of ideas.

N: Do you regret any of your actions during the Ukraine crisis?

D: I overestimated the reaction of the Russian state, and I largely overestimated Putin personally. I didn't believe that in the end he would almost fumble it all. Maybe I could have chosen to use slightly kinder words. But at that moment it was most important in my eyes to mobilise the people in Eastern Ukraine, to get them to defend their identity and to inspire Russian solidarity against the pro-Western political elite that didn't want to be involved there and tried to convince Putin not to enter Crimea and to betray everything. Putin didn't betray everything, he only partly betrayed, because he is always half-and-half. The liberals and pro-Western elite tried to convince him to betray everything, and I for my part and the deep state, deep society, we tried to convince him

not to betray anything, to save everything, but the decision was made as always to go for half-and-half. So, for our side he annexed Crimea and gave partial support to the Donbass, but for the other side he did not continue support for the other parts of Ukraine. And I could have been emotionally a bit calmer, but it was a fight, a fight of ideas, and you need to be bold in such situations and to say the truth when it is not yet clear who will win. So, I fought against the liberal, pro-Western, globalist elite, and partly I failed. And so, that is a defeat because I insisted on other issues and I was betrayed and defeated by the pro-Western elite who managed to restrain and limit Putin's reaction. That is a good example of what strategy is: the strategy was to take back Eastern Ukraine (Novorossiya) and when Putin mentioned the 'Russian world' ('Русский мир') that was the moment when everything was possible. And just at the moment after pronouncing this phrase, there began a huge reaction amongst the political elite against Putin using this concept; immediately Lavrov denounced everything. There was a huge reaction because that was the beginning of the real Russian revolution, the awakening of the Russian subject. We were very close to that in that moment because we almost reached the point of the awakening of the Russian subject, to reverse things, and the transformation and shift from reaction to strategy. But that didn't happen although it could have happened. So, in conclusion maybe I would not change anything if I were put in the same situation because that was the real fight, the fight that we mostly lost, or almost lost, because Crimea and the continuation of the same reactionary politics is not the appropriate price for the level of suffering that the people in Eastern Ukraine endured and for the sanctions; we are fully sanctioned for only half the results. I think that is illogical. But in Russian history the same pattern is repeated many times; the links and ties with the West were too profound and Russian pre-communist or modern liberal elites were too embedded in Western society to break ties and to behave independently as they should have behaved. But the fight hasn't ended; it will continue until the end of time.

N: One could say that this crisis is a good case study of what you risk by following geopolitical theory and it highlights the dangers of geopolitical determinism; because of the geopolitical idea of the Heartland and the need to protect border zones and peripheries, the human cost has been enormous with over 10,000 dead, a million refugees, an ongoing semi-frozen conflict with no end in sight, crippling economic sanctions, and the revival of heightened Cold War tensions which could lead to a catastrophic nuclear war. So, could one argue that it is actually more destructive to follow geopolitical theory than to ignore it?

D: If we ignore geopolitical theory, we will pay a thousand times more. We will pay with our sovereignty and our independence. If we don't react, we will disappear as a nation, a country, and a civilisation, so the stakes are much higher. Geopolitics is not a kind of theory or pure science or subjective understanding of reality; it is a part of

historical being. If we ignore geopolitics, the other will not ignore it. This is exactly why the Soviet Union collapsed. We withdrew our troops from Eastern Europe and gave the post-Soviet states liberty, and then the West immediately or almost immediately seized the same spaces and integrated them into NATO. So, if we ignore geopolitics the same thing would continue until the moment when we have nothing at all.

N: But you could argue it the other way: the fact that both Russia and the West follow the same geopolitical logic leads to conflict. For example, the West created NATO because it was following the geopolitical logic of protecting its own periphery and its stake in the control of the Heartland of Eurasia. This in turn created tensions with the Soviet Union who followed the same geopolitical idea and created the Warsaw Pact. These two decisions set the framework for confrontation for decades to come, and indeed we are still feeling the effects today. And to take another example; Afghanistan, Britain in the 19th century, the Soviet Union in the 20th century and the US in the 21st century all followed the same geopolitical logic of securing this important strategic location and terrible consequences ensued. I could go on, there are many such examples. But the point is when everyone follows the same geopolitical logic we are liable to fall into trouble. So, perhaps it is better for both sides to abandon this way of thinking.

D: Maybe, but if there is a group of decision makers who are motivated by geopolitical logic, you have no choice but to deal with it. We could not come to Brzezinski or Washington and say, 'please stop using geopolitics'. We tried it once with Gorbachev and look what happened. It is interesting that on Russian television I met Georgy Shakhnazarov, who was an adviser to Gorbachev and was in favour of liberalism, globalisation, perestroika, glasnost and so on. And I confronted Shakhnazarov as an absolute enemy because he had written articles on the global society and how we could govern it, and that it is governable; I attacked him and what did he answer? He said, 'Don't attack me. I agree with you, Mr Dugin. I have read your books and texts on geopolitics, but we ignored geopolitics; we were motivated and acted without geopolitical understanding. We thought that stopping our ideological communist approach was enough to gain the confidence of the West and that we would end the hostility between us. And we failed precisely because we were stupid idiots who did not believe in geopolitics when the other side did, and now we see that you were right'. And instead of fighting against this former adviser of Gorbachev and globalist agent of influence, I found a sincere Russian/Soviet old patriot who almost cried because of his country's ignorance of geopolitics. So, that is an example of maybe how hard geopolitics is, because we cannot convince the other side not to use it. And I think that there was a real chance given by Gorbachev, and by these sincere people like Shakhnazarov, to the West. And so in return the West should give multipolarity as a gift. The West, instead of pursuing the path of NATO expansion, should have accepted Gorbachev's offer as a sign of real friendship and as an invitation to create a balanced

world. But, instead of that, there was the 'Unipolar Moment', and the Atlanticist strategy of inviting the people of Eastern Europe into the North Atlantic Alliance. This Atlanticist strategy was pure Mackinder and followed the Sea Power concept. As the neoconservative Paul Wolfowitz clearly stated, the most important danger for the United States is the appearance of an independent, political entity in Eurasia, and so this possibility needs to be eliminated and the Russian Federation must be dismembered and all ethnic rebellions must be supported and, after that, the world will be ours. So, I would like to sacrifice geopolitics, and that was the case when I spoke about Trump. If we have a sincere, realist leader of the West, who is ready to sacrifice geopolitics, I would be the first to support this because I know the costs of it. And when I identified in Trump this will to abandon Atlanticism and geopolitics, I applauded that. It would be great to come to a completely different geometry of international relations based on multipolarity, the 'Make America Great Again' slogan in Trump's presidential campaign meant precisely multipolarity. America is concerned with America, Europe with Europe, Russia with Eurasia, the Muslim world with itself, and so no more interventionism: let's concentrate instead on America's inner problems. That was great, and it was precisely the abolition of geopolitics that I applauded. So, I partly agree that the costs of geopolitics are high, but not knowing them and not reacting at least against the geopolitical aggression of the West as a Sea Power is irresponsible, and this is precisely the thing that made Shakhnazarov, the adviser to Gorbachev, cry.

N: Just to finish on the Ukraine issue for today; in your view, what is the solution to the Ukraine crisis? Four years on and we still see no end in sight and no solution. The conflict remains in a semi-frozen state, there are daily ceasefire violations, and people continue to suffer.

D: I think there is no other solution but to liberate Eastern Ukraine.

N: How would that be a solution? I mean you might get even NATO involvement if Russia were to go further. I suspect that was probably one of Putin's considerations in not going further at the beginning of the crisis, as he surmised that he could not hold the whole of Eastern Ukraine in such a situation.

D: If you are bold enough you can withstand anything.

N: But that could lead to full nuclear war with NATO. Are you prepared for full nuclear war with NATO?

D: I don't think that would happen; we were threatened with full war with NATO in Georgia, in Abkhazia, in Crimea, and nothing followed. So, we should proceed…

N: It is a dangerous bluff though, if you are wrong.

D: Yes, but it is also a dangerous bluff if I am right. I agree; if we attacked Kiev, for example, that would be too much. In that I see a problem. But Eastern Ukraine is our zone of responsibility. And if we allow it to cease being our zone of responsibility, the

West will declare tomorrow that Crimea is part of Ukraine. So, that would be a terrible bluff because they will support Kiev's pretension to regain Crimea.

N: But the West supports the return of Crimea to Kiev today. And…

D: …And they will support the return of Eastern Ukraine with the same passion as they support Crimea. There is no difference between Crimea, Odessa and Kharkov, and this I know very well. In the eyes of Putin there is a difference; Crimea has voted, but Crimea voted because there were conditions for the vote. But they will not have the others because the other regions had no conditions for voting. So we need to organise conditions for the free vote exactly as in Crimea. In such a situation things would be different. We are threatened by an encounter with NATO in other situations, but Ukraine is not of vital importance to them, it is not Mexico or Canada, or part of American territory or European territory. Ukraine is the border between Europe and Russia, and, I am sorry, but the border passes by my Poltava. So, the border is inside Ukraine, not outside. So, to establish this border is a geopolitical duty. Now we are not on our border. We were threatened in a similar way in Yeltsin's time; for example, we were obliged to accept the independence of Chechnya, and if we hadn't accepted that, we would have had an encounter with NATO.

N: But this case is somewhat different because Ukraine became a sovereign state which Russia recognised and in the 1994 Budapest Memorandum on Security Assurances even gave security guarantees to uphold its territorial integrity in exchange for its nuclear weapons. And what annoyed the West so much and terrified the Eastern European countries (who feared a similar move against them) was the fact that this was a challenge to the conception of sovereignty, a sovereign state lost a part of its legal and internationally recognised territory, that is, Crimea…

D: What about Kosovo?

N: Well, that was not quite the same. Kosovo became an independent state; no-one absorbed Kosovo, whereas Russia annexed Crimea. And Crimea had been internationally recognised (including by Russia) as part of Ukraine.

D: I agree that this was not the best solution. A better solution is to occupy Eastern Ukraine, and then give Eastern Ukraine the chance to define its fate, its destiny.

N: But if you occupied it with Russian troops, wouldn't it then all too easily become a part of Russia? I mean, it might be difficult to have an independent and free vote in such circumstances.

D: Not necessarily. There are American troops in Kosovo and Kosovo is not part of the United States or NATO. There are many solutions. The problem is that we have taken a part which is both too big and too small at the same time. Unification with Crimea is not absolutely necessary, but what was absolutely necessary was to create the conditions for self-determination in Eastern Ukraine in order to save the Russian world. This would be logical. I don't say that this would be easy, or that there is not a game to

play; no, not at all. History is open. But all this is very far away from the United States, very far. It is not a place of interest for them. For example, at the same time we could declare that we support some Indians in Mexico and intervene there, declaring that we are relieving their suffering, or something like that. Or we could destroy the wall between Mexico and the United States and claim we are supporting Mexican immigration, or something like that. So, the interventionism of the West is on a much greater scale than the defensive nationalism of Russia. I don't agree at all with how this was done and what was done. But I still insist that the end of the Ukraine crisis will be possible only when Eastern Ukraine is totally liberated from the control of Western Ukraine. After that there can be a two-state solution as in Israel, or a confederation, or a unification with Russia, or a unification with the US, or something else: anything is possible. And today Eastern Europe is changing in our direction. I think there will soon be a totally new situation where this absolutely pro-Western Atlanticist Ukraine will be doomed to isolation. So, in many ways, there are positive changes. I think that NATO is not as stable or united as before. We see the opposition of Italy, and we see the growing opposition of populist movements, and we see Brexit. So, if we stay there, the situation might become much more favourable for us. And in that sense Putin is quite satisfying because he reacts. As a reactionary he is the best, but as a strategist he is not enough. And so, I think this is a problem that is invisible to the West. They think that Putin is something like Dugin, and they are not dealing with us. I am sanctioned because of Putin. Maybe Putin should pay something for my writings or my words, even though he did not contribute to them. Nevertheless there is quite a connection between strategy and reaction in this case.

May 9

The following day we met again on a sunny bridge near Red Square. With the roar of the masses behind us, naturally our conversation turned to the significance of the day.

N: Alexander we meet again on Victory Day, a day of celebration and great contrasts. On the one hand we have this quiet, sombre and meaningful parade of people remembering their loved ones who died in the Second World War. On the other hand, we have this show of raw military power with sights and sounds that would make even the great Knight of the Rueful Countenance shake with terror. What are your thoughts on such a day?

D: So, in Soviet times Victory Day was maybe one of the most sacred holidays and festivals (in the communist sense). And there was always a mixture of feelings. First of all, Victory Day was a celebration of the victory that we won in a war that was maybe

the largest and most difficult in our history, when we were attacked not only by Germany but also by many other European nations that joined Hitler's coalition. And it was a real test for our people, and for our country. And it was a fight for sovereignty, for independence, and for identity. And it was as well a unification of the traditional, national feelings with Soviet ideology. It was not only a communist war, but the People's War (народная война) and it was considered to be sacred as well by the Orthodox Church. So, it was a point of unification. But in Soviet times it was also the commemoration of the victory of the Soviet army. In the 1990s this day declined in importance. There were political clashes and even confrontations between pro-liberal groups that didn't want to celebrate it too much and patriotic opposition groups who did. However, the liberal regime of the 1990s didn't in reality attack this holiday, but only tried to diminish its influence because it was considered to be Soviet and nationalist, but at the same time it was a holiday and an event. So they didn't dare attack it directly, but rather tried to limit its influence and to add a bureaucratic attitude to it, and they also tried to criticise Stalin and some Soviet leaders of the time in order to diminish their influence. And it is interesting that recently, not with Putin, but in the last five or six years, there has been a kind of revival of this day. So, more and more the commemoration and celebration of this day became the foundation of a new ideology and a new national idea. An idea that started with a concept proposed by some ordinary people to celebrate the so-called *Immortal Regiment* (Бессмертный Полк). It was just an invitation from normal people in the provinces of Russia; it was not from the government. The suggestion was to take the photos of the fallen during this war and come together to celebrate. It was a pure social initiative from below. And little by little the movement of Бессмертный Полк became more and more widespread. A few years ago the government began to support this as well with some technical organisation. But the initiative itself was started by the public. It is very interesting that this movement has grown so much. Now almost everybody has parents who died during the war either on the front or in other roles helping the country to fight against this aggression. And little by little it has become something new, a meeting point where the government and the people, the elite and the masses, people from all political groups and all generations unite in some common and absolutely universal event (for Russian people). And there are some interesting points that appear in this commemoration. First of all, the sacredness of death, which was not stressed so much in the Soviet period because death didn't exist in the communist universe, but the commemoration of death was a part of our tradition. And this celebration coincides with various points in the Christian calendar and tradition because, precisely in the beginning of May, our ancestors celebrated the day of the dead, the day of their reappearance and our memory of them. This was linked to Easter, but the date of Easter isn't fixed, while in ancient times it was precisely the beginning of May. So, this reappearance and rebirth of a very,

very ancient commemoration of death in the beginning of May is very interesting. And it is a commemoration in all senses because the belief is that the dead return in that moment. So, now when people, the huge mobs, and almost all the Russian population go to celebrate Victory Day with portraits of the dead, this is the unification of the living with the dead. This is a celebration of families and lineage, of the people as a community and also the unity between the living and the dead. So the role of the dead and not only their commemoration, but the invitation to go together, to come together with others in these marches became a kind of awakening of some very ancient beliefs. This is as well a celebration of victory, but it is also a day of sadness and sorrow for 'Death' who returns. This is very deep, and acquires a deeper meaning. And this return of the dead at the moment of national victory is as well considered as a kind of base for a new world order, where pre-Soviet, Soviet and post-Soviet ideologies can come together and where all generations and political groups can unite. And I would like to stress the Eurasian aspect of all this. Eurasian ideology insists on two main points. First of all, on the polyethnic/multi-ethnic nature of Russian society, tradition and nation. This is the unification of different peoples and ethnic groups that form our identity. And secondly, the idea of strong opposition to the West, because in our understanding of history, this was not only an attack by Germany; this was an attack by the West, by Europe and the Western world, which before this was represented by the Teutonic knights, after that by Napoleon, and then by Hitler. So, this was a victory of Russians over Westerners. It was a patriotic victory with a strong anti-Western feeling and a multi-ethnic, international and multi-nationalist element inside. This is something new and something Eurasian, something organic for us. But at the same time it is ideologically new because normally internationalism is liberal and cosmopolitan; everybody is good, let's overcome national boundaries, borders, limits and so on. But in the case of Eurasianism this is not so. It is a kind of limited internationalism. So, we are brothers and friends, we are part of the whole, but our brotherhood has a historical and civilisational limit. It is not infinite, but finite. And it includes those who are a part of the Eurasian civilisation, but not the other. So, there is unification with the Georgian people who participated in the Great Patriotic War. But at the same time it excludes unification with the West as it was considered to be the enemy. And there is a kind of internationalism on one side, and patriotism on the other side. Normally liberalism is considered to be internationalist and nationalism is considered to be patriotic. But Eurasianism has completely different dimensions, an imperial dimension and a civilisational dimension of these two elements. And we developed in the late 1980s a kind of political philosophy of this. Now we see that this represents a kind of popular spirit of society itself; the Russian people themselves are going in that direction because there is a celebration of our unity, sovereignty, identity, freedom, and of our victory.

And at the same time a unification and a kind of synthesis of different peoples and cultures. So, little by little, this day is becoming a purely Eurasianist day.

N: Well, I had a rather different take on this event. Walking through the so-called *Immortal Regiment* (Бессмертный Полк), I saw a few posters with UK, US and USSR flags all together on them. And this was rather interesting because many would say that actually this was a time when the Soviet Union, Britain and the US only by uniting together were able to achieve victory over Nazi Germany and its allies. So, I understand what you are saying: of course the Soviet Union played a tremendously important part, but the victory itself was a product of the union between the West and Russia (or Eurasia, if you will).

D: We (the majority) don't perceive it this way, especially now, when we are under sanctions, accused, and blamed by the West. I think the role of the United States and the allies in our understanding of the victory in the war was never big. This was our war, and we won it. It was a great victory. We understand and remember that we had allies, but in our understanding it was first of all a victory of the Russian people over their enemies. And the fact that only a few years after this victory, when there was a chance to promote friendship with the West, a Cold War began instead. This Cold War was perceived as a continuation of Hitler's war. So, in our historical vision, the alliance with the United States, England and France was a historical episode; while important, it ends always with something else, in this case the Cold War. So, we are obliged to concentrate much more on our own side and role without of course openly diminishing the role of the allies.

N: Are you not inspired by this example to look for ways for uniting these former World War II allies? Or do you think there is no hope for such unity ever again?

D: Two times in the 20th century we tried to go towards the West: during the Second World War and in Gorbachev's time. And, in our understanding, the West in both cases betrayed our friendship. And after this very short moment of cooperation there followed a new wave of aggression from the West. The moments of peace and friendship were very short and the Cold War and periods of confrontation were very long. At the same time, I don't think that in Russian memory we still have animosity or hatred towards Germans. We don't blame the Germans themselves; we blame the West (Germany being part of the West). So, in our eyes Germans were not essentially guilty, but rather the guilt lies in the traditional opposition between Western and Eurasian civilisation. For example if we stressed the German role, the positive role of our allies would appear more pronounced. But we don't concentrate specially on the guilt of Germany, including the guilt of Nazism. For us, more important was the eternal fight between the East and West, between Western Christian civilisation and Orthodox or Eurasian civilisation, and not so much the Germans or ideology itself. In the Soviet times it was seen as an ideological victory of communism (or more precisely Stalinism) over Nazism. But now

we would not consider it as such anymore because we don't consider ourselves to be Stalinist or Soviet anymore. The ideological aspect is put aside somewhat. I think rather that a geopolitical and historical consciousness prevails today in our understanding, interpretation and reading of Victory Day.

N: In your view, today how far away do we stand from another war of such gigantic scale?

D: As I have said, war is always possible.

N: On this scale though?

D: Yes, yes a Third World War is always possible after the end of the Second. In the 20th century everybody talked about the necessity of peace and its topics were more developed than ever, and yet the most destructive, most terrible wars were precisely in the century of the glorification of global peace. So, the speech of peace is not enough to prevent war. And I think that the contradictions between civilisations, and precisely between the unipolar world and multipolar world, between Western hegemony and the will of the people to defend their own identity, is growing, so this confrontation is growing. We are approaching a war. There is always a way to prevent it or to avoid it, but in order to avoid it, we need to recognise the probability and possibility of it, in order to be more responsible. And I think that this day (Victory Day) is as well a kind of demonstration of the will of the Russian people to stay strong with our principles, with our values, with our historical memory and to show that we are united, we are consolidated, we have long memories of our victories and of our history. And the role of the dead is important here because 'the people' live not only in the present, but in the past and in the future. And the role of little children coming with their parents to commemorate Victory Day is a kind of continuation of generations. So, 'the people' consist of the living, of the dead as well as of the generations to come. They are all present in this moment. And I think this readiness is very important, so we are ready for war because we won the most terrible war in our history — it was horrible, and we lost millions, many millions of Russian lives for this and we don't want to repeat it. But at the same time, neither Trump nor Boris Johnson nor the West with all its allies could never impose on us their 'unipolar will'. We are a historical subject, we are a living being, 'the Russian people' is a living being that will live forever fighting against aggressors and affirming our own identity, sovereignty and free will. So, I think that this event celebrates the Russian subject in a very important moment in history. Russia is the subject of history, and we always were the subject, not object or tool, and we will be forever.

N: Moving on to other topics, yesterday President Trump mentioned that he is going to pull out of the Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action (JCPOA), the Iran deal. What do you think of this decision and of Trump in general? I know you were a big fan of his during the election campaign, but after his aggressive actions towards Russia (that is,

sanctions), Iran, Syria, North Korea, and his opposition to arms control regimes more generally, what do you think of him now?

D: I think that Trump was hijacked or taken hostage by the American deep state, by the traditional neocons. The swamp has drained Trump. I have personal sympathy for this brave guy; he has made a great success with the economy in the United States. On the domestic level he is a winner, I would say. I would also say that he stays strong against all these incredibly crazy attacks against him, and so I have sympathy for him. But he has betrayed all his promises to the American people in international and foreign policy. And I think he isn't happy with this. He is obliged to make some compromises with the unipolar political elite, 'the swamp'. But in foreign politics he has lost some credibility. For example, he tried to combine his personal hatred towards Islam and his personal devotion towards Israel with a globalist agenda at the same time. But in his own eyes, I think he does not consider his action to be a kind of betrayal, because he was forced into doing this. I think he has sacrificed a part of his anti-interventionist ideas. But at the same time, he thinks he still follows his own way. So, to say that I am disappointed would be too much. I was happy with his election campaign. I think that the people voted and elected Trump not for who he is, but for what he said. So, the choice of the American people voting for Trump was much more than Trump himself. It was a historical decision. So, the American people have begun to shape their historical presence outside of the political elite that usurped the right to represent the American people and American society. And Trump is just a moment in this campaign. He represents the moment of the first appearance on the international scene of the 'American people' outside of the 'American elite'. And today we can consider this 'American people' as our friends and allies in this great war. The peoples were together, but the political elite of the West, with their Cold War, betrayed the will of the people and the cause of peace. In Russia we can also see that we are united on Victory Day on principles and on the basic foundations of our society outside and beyond all political disagreements and all critical relations of some aspects of power. This is precisely the *populism* that the American people have voted for. A populism that represents the unity of the political leaders with the people. And I wish for this type of populism for the West. It is discredited by political elites; it is considered to be something irresponsible, something emotional, and something that lacks coherence. But I think that we need to rethink the meaning of coherence. Coherence is what the people want. The identity of people is the basis of coherence, and he who serves his people, serves the principles of coherence, and does not impose his principles on society.

N: But as I mentioned before in terms of foreign policy, it seems to me that Trump has been very aggressive towards Russia, China, Iran, North Korea and Syria and has just continued the Atlanticist policy of the US. And so geopolitically, in terms of your

Eurasian plans, is not populism actually dangerous for you because it has enabled Trump to get into power and pursue these policies against you and your allies?

D: I think Trump has not yet superseded the traditional Russophobic foreign policy of Bush Jr. or Obama. I think that he is in the same line, but not…

N: He has turned the volume up.

D: Yes, but at the same time he is accused of being pro-Russian, so he is obliged to fight back, to strike back in order to show that he is not pro-Russian at all. So…

N: But, what about your geopolitical allies? He is going after all of them: Iran, China, Syria.

D: So, concerning Iran, this represents the part of Trump which is unconditionally devoted to Israel and its interests. This anti-Iranian agenda was in Trump from the beginning. He promised to sabotage Obama's Iran deal and here is the result. Steve Bannon himself, whom I respect very much, has the same anti-Iraninan attitude, so this was just part of the original version of Trump's agenda; it is nothing new. And confrontation with China was the other main point of Trump's presidential election campaign. But the problem is with Russia; Trump promised no more hostility and confrontation with Russia. And precisely this point, not too much his anti-Iranian or anti-Chinese attitude, but the absence of Russophobia in the early Trump was the focal point of the huge attack of the globalists. So, this was the weak point of Trump. And this was one of the most important reasons why many of Trump's supporters were obliged to leave the government, including Bannon himself. Trump wanted to establish good relations with Russia without promising good relations with Iran, China or North Korea. That was the point of his traditional agenda. And the most serious difference in the foreign policy between Trump pre-election and Trump post-election was his approach towards Russia. But it was precisely this relationship that was the centre of the legal cases, inquiries and many other forms of pressure. And that is the point. So, to be anti-Iranian or anti-China is normal in the case of Trump as this corresponded to his own vision of foreign politics. And there is nothing criminal in that; that is realism.

N: Whether or not that was what you expected is not so important, the fact is he is hitting your allies and surely doing damage to your Eurasian axis. The fact that you are not critical of these attacks is rather puzzling. Geopolitically are you not worried about this?

D: I think it is not so dangerous. For example, when there is more distance between the United States and Iran, there will be less distance between Moscow and Iran. And when China is under attack, China will try to find closer relations with us. So, all that is quite normal. For example, the only way that could really be dangerous is if there were a direct confrontation with us. All the rest could be useful and that precisely was the reason for the radical hatred towards Trump. And if, for example, he changed his attitude towards Russia, he could pass for the deep state, for the swamp — so this is

important for Trump. And this was one of the central points. If he is a realist with no Atlanticist eschatological agenda to destroy Eurasia as is expressed and manifestly affirmed in the concept of neoconservatism and Atlanticism, all the rest could be put in the context of the multipolar realist paradigm. If there is unconditional Russophobia, then that is something different. That would be the pure continuation of the previous politics. And for Russia I don't think that good relations between China and United States, or between Washington and Iran are a good thing, not at all. So, let them be on our side, let them be under Trump's attack, but the most important thing is to try to consider Russia as a rational and respectable player in this situation. Yes, they are in the zone of our responsibility, and we can take this responsibility and be a broker between those who are rogue states or bad guys and the West. And that is precisely what we expected from Trump. To recognise us not as the centre and the highest expression of evil, but rather as a broker that is not an ally in the strategic sense, because in the unipolar world we cannot imagine an ally with two centres of decision and not one. But I think that the role of broker was possible. And it was precisely against this aspect of Trump's foreign policy that the anti-Trump campaign before his election was directed; that is, he was accused of being a Russian spy or agent.

N: Do you think there is any truth in this accusation?

D: There is no truth in it. For example, on some site of an American conservative they blamed me for putting Trump in power. The stupidity of the West knows no limits. It is an incredibly crazy way of thinking. But I am absolutely sure that we had nothing to do with Trump. For example, just look at how our fight against Telegram is going. Three weeks ago the Russian government decided to stop Telegram from functioning, and yet everyone still uses it, including myself (I think it has a very good network and service), so we could not even do this effectively. Therefore, do you seriously think with such capacities we could intervene decisively in an American election? Everything was staged in order to prevent Trump from carrying out his own version of foreign policy in relations with Russia. So, all the rest is not so important for the globalists, because the other points correspond more or less with the neoconservative vision of being pro-Israel and anti-Muslim, which is essentially the traditional hawkish American foreign policy. Maybe the details are different. But relations with Russia are primordial. So, we could expect from Trump realism in relations with Russia without influencing him. We expected this; we heard that he insisted during his campaign on this aspect. I was very, very pleased and I believed in this, because it was a change of paradigm from unipolarity and liberalism in international relations to realism. And that is possible; this was always part of American foreign policy. So, there is nothing completely revolutionary in this. Maybe for a long time *traditional realism* was forgotten or secondary in American History but it prevailed in a few periods, for example in the early 19th century, and before the First World War for almost ten years. But afterwards

Wilson destroyed this isolationist realism. So, realism is possible and was possible. It is not so unique or common, but it is not something completely impossible. And it was precisely to prevent this realism being implemented that all these false flag operations against Trump were carried out and all these accusations were made of him being a Russian spy, who was put in the White House by the Russians.

N: You say that Russia is not capable of doing such things. Well, what are the Russians capable of doing then? How does Russian hybrid warfare, which we hear so much about (most notably in the case of Crimea), work?

D: So, I am not a specialist in the informational area. But, for example, fourteen years ago I was the first in Russia to attract attention to the existence of 'network warfare', because before then it was considered to be a game, a computer game and not a kind of strategy that was implemented already in the American army from the beginning of the 1990s. I made the first lectures about this. But, some years ago after these lectures they still refused to believe that this was something serious. So, there is a terrible, terrible delay in our understanding of 'network warfare', soft power and hybrid warfare. We only know it by name. It is normal that with RT and Sputnik we are trying to promote a Russian point of view on the global level. I think they are good in some ways, but very, very inefficient in other ways. This is the first effort to influence something, and to imitate the strategy that the United States and the West have been carrying out for decades already. These are the first steps. And why are we blamed for this? I think it is because those who fight against us exaggerate the dangers (of RT and Sputnik) in order to kill them at birth. At the moment RT has a very small impact, but it could develop into something more important. So, we need to blame it now because it will be too late if we let it grow. I think that the idea is the same; they need to blame us now for intervening in the American elections before we actually do so in order to prevent this from happening in the future, when we would be capable of intervening. I think that the idea is to take an offensive strategy now (and blame Russia) and not wait for when Russia is strong enough to present a real threat. They already manufacture a threat in order to have a greater budget to fight against this almost non-existant but exaggerated danger. So, I think that soft power is not only a tool, it is an ideology. The propaganda of liberalism is included in objects, in technology, and in procedures. For example, in the things that people use for everyday life, and in globalist food chains. All this represents the soft power of the West. And in order to oppose something we need to have a symmetric ideology and I assure you that there is a quest, a search for such an ideology. I think that Eurasianism fits better than any other. But it is only the beginning, we could not base our soft power on the national interests of one country; it is impossible. Soft power is something different. Soft power is not the defence of national interests by some other means other than hard power. It is as well information war, hybrid war and everything that has to do with ideas.

N: As I understand it, hybrid war crosses boundaries and involves a creative and tailored combination of soft, hard and even smart power; that is, it is 'little green men' in Crimea, it is the hacking of elections or government institutions, it is information warfare on social media, etc. That is what this term means in the West. So, even with these examples are you really saying Russia is not capable of this type of warfare?

D: We are trying to take a lesson from the West in this. But we are only taking our first steps. I think that maybe with the mobilisation of society (like in Victory Day today) we have some hope of eventually achieving the capacity to develop a real infrastructure for hybrid war. But now we are only taking our first steps. I think that what is going on in the West now is a kind of preventive war against Russia. The West has noticed that we have stopped falling apart as we did in Yeltsin's time and we have begun to concentrate our power. But, we haven't yet achieved the results for which we are blamed; this belongs to the future. For example, I suggested supporting Trump during his campaign and intervening in the social networks.

N: In your book *The Foundations of Geopolitics* over twenty years ago you actually outlined such an approach which, I believe, in the West is now popularly called the 'Gerasimov Doctrine'. But are you saying after all this time it is still not ready?

D: Yes, absolutely. I developed many things on the theoretical level, but it is not accepted in the mainstream; it is treated as marginal. It is accepted with such a delay, and in such a fragmented way, that it is really deplorable…

N: Who are the people standing in the way of this? Is Putin in favour of it?

D: I think that it is more a question of state of mind. For example, some are affected by an illusion of the West, some by progressivism, some by laziness of mind. There are many objective or subjective reasons to oppose it. In order to promote it, you need a society that is mobilised, fully awakened, united spiritually and intellectually, and very ready to act, or at least a tradition of strong education of the elites in the spirit of domination or fighting for sovereignty. And so this is ahead of us, it is not yet the case, although it could appear maybe as a result of a mirror effect. Because when you project some energy and nobody notices it or perceives it, there is only one process. But if you put a mirror in front of you, the rays you emit return. So, what we have now is a mirror; Russia is the mirror of the West, it is the *Significant Other* of the West. And when, for example, the West, the CIA implemented hybrid warfare, information war, they thought only of the effectiveness of this war. But when Russia holds up the mirror and tries to do the same, it is maybe awkward and there have been some disasters or mistakes, but this is normal. I could repeat many times the story of my conversation with Brzezinski. When I came to him, there was a chessboard in front of us and I asked him, 'Mr Brzezinski, do you think that chess is a game for two?' And he said, 'No, never'. That is the normal attitude of globalism and unipolarity. In his mind the metaphor of a chessboard was used only to explain the logic of different players but not real

competition, because there is no competition that could be equal to their player. So, we are trying. Russia tries to propose and manifest itself as a competitor, as the second player playing on the other side of the chessboard. And this provokes hatred and is the reason why the West isn't willing to play with us, because it has no desire to play with anybody, neither with us, nor with the Chinese, nor with the Iranians. So, chess is a one player game. If you start playing with black pieces, then after that you turn the table round and you play with white pieces. It could be very interesting, but the player is still one. And Brzezinski gave his book to me with an inscription which said, 'I wish for Mr Dugin to change completely his views'. That means that he has invited me to help him play with his chessboard. For example, I might watch or carry out his orders; 'please, Mr Dugin, put this figure in this place'. So, he wants me with all my speed, with all my will, to help him move the figures on the field. I think this is very characteristic not of Brzezinski, but of the West. And it is the same with the accusations against us of intervening, and creating networks of influence. We are trying to do this, but we are still in the early stages.

N: So, are you saying that the fact that you have been caught proves that you are in the early stages, because, as you said, you are still trying to work out how to effectively implement this type of warfare?

D: Yes, I observe how we are trying to become a *subject*, how we are trying to use the tactics of hybrid warfare, for example, by trying to support possible groups of influence in the West who could be used to promote our agenda. I observe how all this is appearing and manifesting itself and I see a huge delay. So, we should have begun this thirty years ago. I tried to introduce in the Russian military headquarters the idea of 'network warfare' (or 'network-centric warfare', as it is called in the US) fifteen years after it was already implemented by US admirals and generals. They were using it, for example, in 'Chaos Strategy', and in military review magazines there were many articles about how to use chaos, and how to use this new strategy and war in concrete military operations or in informational coverage of these operations. So, hybrid war and geopolitics were created, imagined and implemented in the West. And we are trying to do something like this, but we are blamed for being aggressors and so on. And how do I know this? Because I am following the West, maybe I am closer to the West than anyone else here. In Russia we have two kinds of people: firstly, pro-Westerners who know the West maybe better than anti-Westerners, but not well enough because they still have many illusions about it and don't understand its deep reality; secondly, anti-Westerners, who don't know the West at all because they don't like it, for example. In this situation we could hardly find a correct response. So, it is rare to find someone who both understands the West but at the same time fights against it. Normally it is either someone who understands or someone who fights. But in my case and in the case of Eurasianism we are trying to study the West in order to understand it, to get a deep knowledge of

what is going on there, to understand its agenda, tools, methods, logic, ideology and the structure of soft power. And nobody believes us because the pro-Westerners don't share our opposition to the West, and patriots don't share our understanding of the West. So, there is a very, very limited part of society and of the Russian establishment that is useful and that can develop some strategic response to the West. It is developing, it is not a hopeless initiative. But because I am at the centre of this, I can say to you: we are very much behind the West in this, and so we are blamed now for something that we will do in the future.

N: Do you think this will be implemented soon? And just thinking about Putin's new cabinet, are there any people you think coming in who can implement this? And has Putin approached you for a possible position in the future government?

D: I think we are very far from this, but we are going in that direction. Everything was ready as of the late 80s. We should have gone with a different speed and in a different direction than the way we went. Eurasianists had already prepared this post-Soviet situation theoretically. So, I think that I should have been invited to do this from the beginning of Putin's reign, and there were calls but everything went the wrong way, with big delays in all senses, in the subjective and objective aspects of society. And I fear that when this call finally comes I will be too old or dead, because they might miss the moment to use the brain. Now the brain isn't used at its full capacity, only the smallest part, one molecule of the brain is used. All the rest is body. But the body is not dead, it is animated by the spirit and by the Russian soul. And so I am optimistic that with or without me, the brain will finally be invited to participate in Russian history once more. There are very rare moments in our history and that is why Putin says 'Russia isn't governed by itself, it is governed by God'. Because, having a realistic understanding of his personality, I suppose, that he could not lead the country in such a good way thanks to his own merits; only God could be responsible for what we have.

N: And a final question, Alexander, regarding Victory Day; how was your family personally affected by this war?

D: My parents fought in the war, my grandparents lost their lives in it, and others were wounded. But every Russian family had some experience, and the sacrifices were huge in every family. There is no family that didn't lose someone, or some parents. So, it is a common pain and a common suffering. I think that we need to take a lesson from this war. There was serious guilt on Hitler's side, but maybe we didn't do everything we could to prevent it. I think that Germans and Russians should be on the same side and not on opposite sides. And that was always geopolitical wisdom, which isn't accepted in history. And when the great people of Russia are fighting against the great people of Germany, both sides always lose, and the third party gains. So, I hope that we will never confront the Germans again. It was the worst thing that happened, that this

bloody war was directed and led by two peoples whose union and alliance is the foundation and ground of the multipolar world.

Chapter 3

Summer

Introduction

This chapter is the largest in the book and contains the most expansive conversations we had during the interview period, as well as two fireside chats with Alex and the members and guests of a monastery we visited, and two lectures Mr Dugin delivered on the Logoi of India and Eastern Europe.

Alexander suggested that we meet in the summer at the monastery of his confessor in a deep forest in the wilds of Russia. We journeyed there by car and while the road seemed endless, we filled the time pleasantly with scintillating chat on a wide range of topics.

July 29

D:…Russia didn't think of the Volga as something belonging to our natural space, it was rather the border line with the Tatars who lived there, with the Steppes, and the Don, Dnieper and Oka rivers that passed by.

N: And what does the forest mean in the Russian understanding?

D: It is a kind of hell.

N: Hell!?

D: Hell and something that is material and under the earth. For example, the Great Mother (in the negative sense) lived in the forest.

N: Why have they placed a monastery in hell, in the forest?

D: Precisely because it was the most deserted place.

N: This is your desert then?

D: Yes, yes. The monks came from the normal living space, from the fields, etc. to the wilderness of the forest, where there is an abnormal situation (just like in the mountains or the desert) in order to go to the most difficult conditions of life, so to go precisely to hell. And there is a very famous monk, St Silouan the Athonite, who had a very wise saying: 'Keep your mind in hell and do not despair.' So, to keep your mind in hell is to be afraid of the coming judgement and to live now as though in hell, in order to be

afraid of the thing that will come after your life. So, the best place for a monk to be is in hell during his life in order to be in heaven in the afterlife.

N: But they will be so used to hell, they might not like heaven…

D: Yes, interesting, there is a spiritual gamble…

N: …that they will consider heaven to be hell…

D: Yes, yes. And there is 'Мать Пустыня' ('Mother Desert'), which is the glorification of something completely safe, a place without savage beings, or bears, and it is so lovely for the heart of the monk, when there are no people, no civilisation, nothing. And that is the real paradise. And to transform hell into paradise is their goal. But, it is interesting, that the forest was always hell.

N: I don't know if you have seen it, but there is a film by the Danish director Lars Von Trier called *Antichrist*, where nature is portrayed as the devil's playground. A rather curious concept, no?

D: Yes, yes I have seen it. And I more or less agree with this concept. I like very much his film *The Kingdom*, it is great.

N: I haven't seen that one.

D: The Danish relations with people in this film are very ironic. It is very surreal and very, very funny.

N: Have you seen his film *Melancholia*?

D: I don't like *Melancholia*, nor too much *Antichrist*. But, I like him in general and particularly *Europa*, which is a very interesting film about the fate and destiny of Europe in the beginning of the liberal era, that was catastrophic for him.

N: What do you think of Tarkovsky?

D: Yes, he is considered to be the best.

N: I think he might be. I have never seen such films like his.

D: Yes, he is very famous as well on the international level.

N: Do you think he conveys a specific Russian style of art?

D: Funnily enough, I think so, yes. But I thought that he was overestimated during the Soviet period because there were so many topics to expose. And I thought that Tarkovsky dealt with only a part of the possible topics, and it was not enough. But it is interesting that after him nothing came. So, these last thirty or forty years are totally lost for Russian cinema. In this frozen age of post-communism there should have been a renaissance of specific topics concerning Russian identity, but finally there was nothing; just a total degeneration of Russian society and culture. So, Tarkovsky now looks even better and is considered to be a kind of genius, the greatest phenomenon. He lived in dark times, and yet he still managed to make very good films.

N: I think that is a problem that is common not just to Russia but elsewhere as well. I don't think Tarkovsky's films have much political depth, perhaps because his aims weren't political or because he had to suppress his political inclinations due to

censorship. Rather, his films appeal to the higher spiritual and artistic instincts of man. I have never seen filmmaking anywhere quite like his. I agree with you that, looking back now, he looks even better, and in my view he achieved something that had not been achieved before in cinema; he created great cinematic works of spiritual art.

D: Yes, I agree. I am not so great a fan of his but I agree with that. So, finally he is one of the best. And *Andrei Rublev* is good.

N: It is an absolute masterpiece. Do you think he captured that period accurately?

D: Not at all, but he didn't hate Russia; he was more or less patriotic and that is already great. Throughout almost all of our history, including the Soviet period, the Russian elite or the state absolutely hated Russian identity, so this was a continuing problem for us; we had elites that hated our people and still hate them today. There were exceptions of course, and in philosophy and the arts there were not so many. And I think that Tarkovsky didn't belong to this artist elite of haters. It is interesting that after the Bolshevik revolution many Jews came from particular places who had no reason to love the Russian people very much, but rather were totally devoted to revolution or Marxism. But, beforehand, when there were no Jews, the hatred was still there, and so it has nothing to do with ethnicity, it was a kind of structural problem; the elite were alienated and they were exchanged for their opposite. Ideologies were exchanged for the hatred of class. So, it is a special relationship between Russian identity and the Russian state. I think there is a kind of opposition between the two, and Tolstoy remarked this in his novel *War and Peace*: the state represented war and the people represented peace. And he considered the Church to be part of the state. He was partly right, as the Church participated in this hatred towards the people, accusing people of being ignorant, dark, savage and so on, and trying to impose on people its rule, and this is the Apollonian aspect of Russian Logos. So the Russian people are a Dionysian entity living inside of a strange alienated and alienating condition of a purely German Logos.

N: What are your thoughts on Andrey Zvyagintsev, a man widely and internationally considered to be one of the great Russian directors working today? While I think he is a very talented filmmaker, his films positively exude the feelings of despair and depression, and convey the distinct impression that he doesn't like modern Russia very much; would you agree?

D: Precisely. Zvyagintsev, no. Most of the artists and the elite in every period hate the Russian people, as they represent the Russian elite. And they could hate as well the Russian state because they consider the state to be too popular and too Russian. So, there is a real hatred. And I think that the reason is in the differences between the two Logoi and here is the real problem. The people had its own reading of religion and of the state which was very special and had nothing to do with the proper individual understanding of religion. The Russian people's religion was a parallel faith and very

different from the official Church. And this was not because of paganism, not at all, but because of a different reading of the same purely Christian ideas and concepts.

N: But in Russia wasn't Christianity originally forced on the peasants, they wanted to keep paganism, didn't they?

D: No, it was accepted from the very beginning but with a special reading. Up to a certain point the popular reading of the Christian doctrine was more archaic than, for example, the paganism of Vladimir. But it was a different structure and a different reading of the same material. For example, we had as a great saint St Nicholas, who was considered to be a god, and maybe a kind of heir of the Holy Trinity, there are very strange concepts around him…

N: That was the peasant's conception of him?

D: Yes, and St Nicholas was the centre of a special cult, and when all the statues of the saints were destroyed, they didn't dare touch the statues of St Nicholas because there would be a revolt immediately, because he was so venerated.

N: Why was St Nicholas so venerated?

D: Because he is a very, very old representation of divinity, a divinity of the earth, of the winter, and a divinity of close relations with the people.

N: There is that naturalistic pagan link again.

D: No, not pagan. It is a figure or a kind of archetype that could live through paganism, Christianity, communism and secularism. St Nicholas represents more than the Church's religious understanding; he is a kind of Russian archetype and his special quality is to be close: God is in heaven, but St Nicholas is here.

N: Isn't that a form of idol worship? It sounds like the Jews who worshiped the Golden Calf; that is, they are placing their devotion towards St Nicholas instead of God.

D: Yes, but it wasn't opposed to Almighty God. However, it was opposed to the prophet Elias who was considered to be pure and heavenly. Elias was venerated and very feared, everybody was afraid of him. St Nicholas was an advocate. The pair (the prophet Elias and St Nicholas) were embedded in the Russian understanding of everyday phenomena. St Nicholas always came to save peasants in trouble, including when a peasant was wrong. Afterwards, St Nicholas would try to improve him, to make him better and even punish him (but only slightly)… St Nicholas is always an advocate of man, and the prophet Elias is a prosecutor. It is the same as the Mother of God; she is always pardoning, she is Grace itself, but she is too heavenly. So, a peasant could not bother her with small problems, as it was considered to be disrespectful. But with St Nicholas you could…

N: Why was St Nicholas more approachable than the others?

D: I don't know the reason why, but maybe it has something to do with his name because 'Kolo' is a circle. And a circle was a name for the Winter Solstice, where the

divinity of the earth was placed exactly. Or maybe because his festival is in winter. Or maybe there is another reason, I don't know. But it was a real cult. It was originally Russian and I think Slavic. And it was transmitted to the Dutch because there were Slavs on the Elba river… the Western Slavs, ancestors of the Mecklenburg and Pomeranian German population there. Through them it was transmitted to the Dutch, Danish, and to the Vikings. That's why there is St Nicholas in the USA and the UK; it was a Slavic understanding. In other Orthodox and Latin countries there is no such thing…

N: I thought the St Nicholas we celebrate was a Greek saint, wasn't he?

D: He was from Lycia in Anatolia. But I think that this figure of St Nicholas has nothing to do with the Slavic one…

The road continued on and on and on, and the conversation fell silent. The vast and majestic Russian countryside spread before us. My mind drifted back to the copy of Alexander's book on the Logos of the UK which he had given me.

N: …I mean it's fascinating. For example, you deal with a lot of myths I didn't know about. Then you go on to the philosophical and theological background of Britain as well. It's a very interesting approach to understanding a country.

D: In every volume there is something that I discovered myself. For example, I didn't know about this duality of English culture. When we have two general images of someone, the other is completely wrong. You can't study something that you don't like. You'd better not do it at all. So you shouldn't treat the other from your perspective, but try to understand it from its own perspective. Philosophical empathy is the only way to get insight.

N: But, sometimes it seemed to me, that you had already decided beforehand that the structure of the book would be the battle between the Logos of Cybele and Apollo. And then you try to fit that into the narrative of the country. When, perhaps, you should have done the opposite; that is, discovered the country first and from that deduced the Logos.

D: But it's a basic mythological principle. I use it sometimes when it's applicable. I don't use it when it's not or I can't see how it works yet. And it's a consequence of studying because I'm studying how to apply these principles. I'm not studying before applying. I think that after finishing my *Noomakhia* my understanding of the three Logoi and their relations will be better than when I started. So it was a kind of premise or initial intuition that in dealing with all cultures and/or any culture I could discover all three Logoi there. But the proportion and the relations between them are so different and so complex, that you cannot put them in a specific scheme to save this approach. But making ameliorations and details, exploring more and more variants… it's rather mathematical. One model can't be applied to everything. English culture is fascinating.

For example, I can easily understand Brexit and what will follow. And how the English cannot step into the future because they are too linked to the past, mentally nobody can really accept the consequences. It is the end to all known forms of English identity and strategy. So no empire, no control of ex-colonies, no America, no intervening in European affairs, and no more competition with Russia (as there is no reason anymore). And now they are falling apart because their other Celtic identity didn't disappear at all. It was conquered, but it didn't disappear. It is still here in the Welsh, in Ireland, and in Scotland. So what to do with this problem? For these nations to submit once more is impossible. Perhaps you need a new normative… but in a way, it's not your way to accept the other. So I think that is the problem. There is also the problem of Britain's place in the world as well. Now is the moment to really think of the Commonwealth because the Commonwealth could be based on multipolar principles. But in order to accept this, the English should concentrate on a deep deconstruction of their own subjectivity. But there is no sign of this in English culture, no sign at all, including the most interesting things in Europe or the United States that are completely disregarded in English culture. So it is absolutely closed. And that is a problem I think.

N: It reminds me in some ways of when we lost the Hundred Years War, because then we lost Europe, we lost friends and a part of our identity as well, and so we didn't know what we were doing or who we were.

D: Yes, because England and France were the same state before the end of the war. So, it was not France and England, it was England and France as a unity. During the Crusades, the kings of France and England were brothers. They were almost the same state. Almost the same…

N: …Kingdom

D: Yes. So it was not only the same culture, religion, and civilisation with its own history, which is obvious, but the same state exactly. It's interesting that after this was the reappearance of Celtic identity. The Stuart dynasty in my opinion was a kind of Celtic red rose or red dragon. And there arose this new kind of thalassocratic[7] period, which is over now and has passed to the US, who instead plays the leading role in the administration of the global empire. After that was the intervention in European affairs in order to subvert European unity based on French-German lines and to not let a continental telluric identity appear in Europe. It's interesting that all this came about in consequential steps. And now nothing can be used as such…

N: However, in many ways we still have the same concerns as always. Brendan Simms, a noted Cambridge historian and geopolitician, remarked in his book *Britain's Europe: A Thousand Years of Conflict and Cooperation* that the UK has two constant geopolitical concerns: firstly, protecting the Low Countries (who act as a final barrier to invasion); secondly, preventing the rise of a regional hegemon in Europe. So, it doesn't matter if we're in the EU, out of the EU, or within an empire. We will always be

concerned about these geopolitical necessities. And he believes that these necessities will continue to guide our geopolitical strategy in the future. Do you agree with this at all?

D: Maybe, but I think that doing this will limit its approach to an Anglo-Saxon world vision. Rather, I think that a re-organisation of the Commonwealth on completely new principles is much more interesting. It could help create a multipolar world, and find its place within this world…

N: Where do you think Britain's place should be in a multipolar world?

D: I think it could find its way in the camp against the hegemony of one power, and against Anglo-Saxon liberalism…

N: So it would fight against itself?

D: A little bit, because, for example, when we abandoned communism, we went against ourselves. From time to time we need to sacrifice ourselves in order to save other paths. There is a kind of British identity that was not always universalist. There is a kind of local liberalism that could be saved because it's a part of English tradition. But imperialistic liberalism is a failure; for example, look at the colonial experience and its expansion of liberalism on a global scale. And giving the leading role to the United States is already the end of the liberal hegemony of the British Empire. There is no more imperialist ambition in Germany; it simply isn't there. Likewise, you cannot save something that you don't have. But you still behave as if you have this power, even though you don't anymore. You have already given it to another power: the US.

N: Yes, shortly after the Second World War we realised we weren't the top dog anymore and so our strategy was then to play Greece to Rome; that is, to help and advise the Americans on geopolitical matters and to provide them with the cultural and ideological foundation of liberalism, and in doing so we would benefit accordingly. And we have been trying to play this role ever since.

D: Yes, but I think the role of the UK in a multipolar world would be to return to inner liberalism or to inner tradition, to the inner self, and to recognise the *Other* in another way than it currently does. We could go back to the first generation of British colonial scientists studying Indian society. In relations with India there were two generations. The first generation was excited by Indian culture and was not too much involved in its concrete politics. But the second generation, spurred on by the utilitarian principles of John Stuart Mill, were radical racists and anti-Indian, who just tried to use India. But at the same time there is the most brilliant English school of understanding of Sufism in your elite, for example, among Prince Charles and the people around him. The people who understand the tradition of the spiritual solution are much better than everybody else and that is, I think, the premise for this multipolarity. In certain situations, many times in history you have shown deep understanding of other cultures, not only once or twice. It is not an exception; it is a part of the British identity. But then

with this knowledge of the *Other* you tried to use it in a utilitarian way to exploit, to submit and to rule and to delight. And so this practical application of theoretical knowledge is the evil aspect of British imperialism and hegemony, which is has come to an end. So you are free from your own evil; not from your own identity, but from the evil side, the shadow of your identity. That is Brexit. You have been liberated in spite of yourself from your shadow. So, it lies to you to find your own light inside of yourself. And to rework and revise your history. There is no sign of it yet, but all the conditions are there for it already…

N: Tony Blair recently gave quite an intriguing speech at Chatham House on Britain's choice going forward. He said that in the future he imagines not the world you are talking about, but a world with three great powers or giants (China, India, US); a number of large players (Russia, Brazil, South Africa); and then a number of medium sized players (Britain, France, Germany, etc.). And he says the problem with this is that the giants tend to sit on the medium players. And if Britain does become divorced from Europe and from America we will just be sat on by China, India, and the US. He doesn't really mention the Commonwealth. So that's his perspective of the future. Do you agree with him at all?

D: The problem is that paranoia comes too easily and quickly from theory to practice. The West is paranoid. Only when you just begin to understand something, you then immediately jump to a conclusion with practical applications. This is the sickness of the West. Maybe it's right, but it is too hasty. We need to concentrate much more and repeat a hundred times the first premises. Maybe where we are committing the error is in the nature of the giants, maybe India, China, and the United States are completely different giants. And maybe the giants are not warlike. So, this judgement is too quick and without sufficient philosophical grounding. And if we try to establish our concrete practical strategy on something that is semi-philosophical, it is a catastrophe. This is a repetition of the same catastrophic paranoid thinking we have seen before. It's all right to think like that, but if you are establishing a political decision on something that could be wrong or right, you have already committed all the errors. You have no space to manoeuvre.

N: I agree, his analysis was somewhat superficial and was almost entirely economically based.

D: That is already a metaphysical error because while the economy is important, it is not destiny. You should open the debate with the question: what is our destiny? Is there something like destiny? It's interesting as well, for example, to consider the problem of destiny and Calvinism. Calvinists believe in predestination and deny free will. If there is free will, there is no destiny (economic, material or spiritual) as there is always a choice, a decision, willpower, error, and consequences for negative or positive actions, etc. So this is the Calvinist Protestant attitude, and is precisely why we are lost. The

most important philosophical implication of Catholicism is the defence of free will. If we are free, our economic destiny is an open question. And you can make decisions that are against economic reason because it's only one dimension and not the whole thing. So, I think that philosophically it's evident, but when we come to the practical side we immediately forget the philosophy. That's a mistake.

N: But, I don't think this is just a British problem; we see it also in America, Europe, and even Russia. These days most elections are, as Bill Clinton famously said, all about the economy. The economy wins elections. It's just the nature of modern politics, unfortunately.

D: That's a problem which was born in the West with Protestantism, late Reductionism and then passed into modernity, and is now universal. For example, Russia is not an exception. And China is not so much of an exception. So everybody is under this charm of materialism.

N: The Cybelian Logos, as you call it.

D: Yes, the victory of the Cybelian Logos is almost universal. It appeared in the West, in modernity and late Protestantism, but it is much deeper than that. It is something that we could find almost everywhere in the world. It is not yet fully universal, but more universal than ever.

N: But no doubt you are aware of the theory of Economic History, which claims that economics determined and defined almost everything that happened in history. So, according to this theory, it is not just a product of modernity, rather its roots can be traced back to the Athenian Empire, the Roman Empire, etc.

D: Yes, it's economic paranoia. For example, in studying some psychic diseases it is clear that paranoia develops precisely like this: you notice that someone is following you, and little by little you unite the points that someone is behind you, he is following you, he's going the same direction, he's turning around the corner exactly as you do, etc. This is the mania of persecution. And so if you concentrate only on the economy, you see the economy everywhere. That is paranoia. For example, at the moment I'm concentrating on the peasantry, so I see their influence everywhere. But I'm using that as an instrument in my analysis. There is the science and the disease. There is psychiatry and there is a psychic disease. If you are a psychiatrist, you are using this methodology as a tool, but you are not the victim of the affliction you are studying. So I am completely conscious of these instrumental paranoias.

N: So, you think you are fully aware of your own bias?

D: Yes, absolutely. I think that without bias you cannot go anywhere. You should have some false idea in order to…

N: …Start from somewhere.

D: Absolutely.

We hit a little trouble on our journey and Alexander quips…

D: The road should confuse!

N: It should not be straight or easy?!

D: No. There is a song by Igor Rasteryaev, 'Russian Road', which glorifies the Russian road, as it didn't let the enemy come in.

As we continue to struggle with the 'glorious Russian roads', I enquire about our destination, the monastery.

N: So, why have they gathered in such a difficult to reach location?

D: Because it's far away from the centre and they came out of the central part of Russia.

N: And is this monastery composed of only Old Believers[8] ?

D: No. But Kovaksa, the nearest village, almost entirely consists of Old Believers.

N: How many Old Believers still exist in Russia?

D: Very difficult to say. Officially around two million.

N: That's a tiny percent of the population.

D: Yes. But in the 18th century they represented almost a third of the population.

We soon conquered the formidable pot-holes, but the conversation stopped again while we dealt with navigational issues. However, shortly afterwards we take up a discussion on the media.

D: …I've done many interviews with Western media (with the BBC or CNN) and in some of them they completely perverted what I said. For example, they asked 'Did Putin interfere in the American elections?' I answer 'No', but they translate it as 'Yes'. So, they are not fascists, but sometimes they use Stalinist totalitarian propaganda tactics! For example, with the BBC there was one guy who did a very good interview with me. He asked very reasonable questions and I had no problem with him. He criticised and made comments, but that is possible in journalism; he shouldn't have to agree with me, that is correct. However, my interview with a different BBC guy, John Sweeney, was a disaster because he didn't want to hear anything I said. He needed me in order to present his own very special vision, and nothing more. I think this is not journalism; it's the complete opposite. You can make any comments you wish, but there are some rules you should follow, not ideological rules but human or even professional rules.

N: Did you walk out of the interview or did you continue with it?

D: When he started to shout at me saying, 'Putin is killing people! How dare you say anything about this dictator and mass killer, this fascist and Nazi Putin!'. So, his shouting was the end of the interview! I stopped it. He was not interviewing me! I don't

know what it was, it wasn't an interview or journalism, it was just a kind of Nazi propaganda.

N: Unfortunately there seem to be a lot of people doing these sensationalist type of interviews these days, probably because they are good for ratings. But I recently saw an interesting interview with your Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov, and a Western journalist (his name escapes me), and throughout it Lavrov had the patience of a saint. The journalist constantly interrupted him and tried to put words in his mouth, but Lavrov just quietly and patiently answered him, logically explaining his position.

D: It depends on the mood. I can as well sometimes tolerate such a conversation. But this guy (John Sweeney) was psychologically aggressive and incorrect. Maybe he suffers from some kind of psychological condition, or maybe he was in a bad mood, maybe I was in a bad mood. But when the shouting starts, then it's not good. In another situation, maybe I would accept this, but it really depends. So, it is not so much a question of ideology, but more of style.

N: Yes, it's a question of presentation, and often the goals of mainstream journalists conflict. On the one hand, they have to be entertaining and in the British mentality — particularly the BBC — to be entertaining means to challenge, so the interview almost turns into a battle. On the other hand, this approach often backfires and the journalist gets accused of being rude, aggressive, and not letting his guest speak! So, it can be difficult to strike the right balance between being entertaining and being polite.

D: Yes, there are limits and there are different types of people. I don't like aggressive debates. I understand that they are funny, but they are only suitable for certain people. I am not one of those people.

N: But I've seen you do an interview with Alex Jones on InfoWars. And he has this very aggressive American style of interviewing. How did you cope with him?

D: Yes, but he was polite. He asked questions, and he tried to understand.

N: Do you think he understood what you were saying?

D: I don't know exactly. Maybe he thought was consulting me about geopolitics, but he didn't understand much. And he tried to find out why I am against Francis Bacon. I tried politely to explain to him that it has nothing to do with Atlanticism. But it has something to do with NATO and geopolitics. It wasn't at the beginning of the discussion. Finally, this was not his aggressive and sometimes crazy approach, but rather he was playing with me. This kind of game I can accept; he didn't argue, he just asked. Now, if you were to compare Sweeney from the BBC with Alex Jones, I think you would find that Alex Jones was the polite and professional journalist.

As we edged ever closer to our destination the conversation turned to matters of a more profound nature.

N: Was Vladimir the Great, the man who converted the Kievan Rus to Christianity, much of a philosopher? For example, did he understand Christian Neo-Platonism?

D: No. It is interesting; he was a savage. The conversion was based on very difficult philosophical ideas. It's hard to imagine how it could have happened. Firstly, there was no enquiring knowledge of philosophical ideas. Secondly, he sent his ambassadors to ascertain how religious cults were celebrated. And finally his ambassadors were convinced that the Greek Orthodox were right principally because of two arguments. Firstly, because of the beauty of the liturgy and because of the promise to go to heaven after death. Indeed, in order to assist this, there was a mirror of this earthly liturgy in heaven. So after normal Christian life, the Greeks promised to the ambassadors the same beauty, the same liturgy in heaven. This ecstatic mystical union was the second reason. The third reason was marriage. And the fourth was the curing of blindness.

N: I understand that the ambassadors were also overwhelmed by the richness and inventiveness of Constantinople. For example, they were very impressed by their golden thrones which suddenly raised and appeared from nowhere. And also they chose Orthodoxy for another more practical reason, because it was the faith of the Eastern Roman Empire, which was the principal power in Europe and the most useful and strategic ally to have. The Pope at this stage had a more symbolic and fragmentary power and didn't command armies, whereas the Byzantine Emperor did and his power was more concentrated. And perhaps the icing on the cake for them was the fact that Greek Orthodoxy allowed them to enjoy alcohol (unlike in Islam, for example).

D: Exactly. But regarding Constantinople being a military ally, it was a changing situation, and the Byzantine army in that period was not so great. The Russians before Vladimir, at least in our tradition, had already taken Constantinople no less than twice. So it couldn't be a real strategic decision. And in terms of power the Byzantine Empire was not so different from, for example, the Pechenegs or the Magyars. It was the ambassadors (and not necessarily Vladimir the Great) who believed the Byzantine Empire to be great.

N: It is interesting how the Byzantine Empire managed their security. I understand that they very often preferred to pay barbarian mercenaries to protect them and/or secure their interests rather than use their own army. And it's intriguing just how long this empire survived using this method. While the Roman Empire, who tended to use their own military forces rather than barbarian mercenaries, fell much earlier.

D: The Byzantine Empire was a continuation of the same Roman Empire, they were the descendants of Romans. They called themselves Romans, not Byzantines or Greeks. And they followed the same strategy as the Romans. How they fought just depended on the period. When they were strong they acted exactly as the Romans and used their own armies. Only in the late periods did they make more careful alliances with the people around them. So, it was all relative. But concerning drinking, it is interesting that this

was not from Slavic tradition. In the *Primary Chronicle*[9] it is said that for Russians to drink wine was a joy. However, in Vladimir's time Russian was understood to mean the Prince's military group of Germans. So, at that time, to say 'for Russians' was the same as to say 'for Germans'. Because Slavic people called themselves 'Slavyane', and not Russians. And 'Rus' is a German word. So, it was the German-Scandinavians who liked to drink, and not so much the Slavs. Well, at least not so much wine, as it wasn't well cultivated in Russia.

N: They prefer to drink beer or mead instead?

D: Yes, it is not a Slavic tradition to drink wine, but to drink beer — yes. And nobody cared about the Slavic people as they were just peasants. So when Vladimir decided, the argument of drinking was considered one of the habits of the tradition of German elites, and not of the general population. It's very interesting. And so-called banquets ('пир' in Russian) were typically a tradition of the Prince.

N: Yes, it was a Viking tradition.

D: Exactly. So, Russian traditions in the beginning were synonymous with Viking traditions. For Vikings to drink was also a joy, while Islam prohibited this behaviour.

N: So, this was one of the main reasons why they accepted the rule of Constantinople…

D: Also, the ambassadors were shocked by the ugliness of Muslim prayer.

N: Which gods did they believe in before they chose Christianity? And in their worship of them, did they practice human sacrifice?

D: Well, maybe. Vladimir, before accepting Christianity, installed a kind of Baltic-Sarmat pantheon, which was in no way Slavic. And so it was a sort of artificial construction, a German-Baltic mixture with Sarmat elements. The main Slavic gods, the Veles, for example, were absent. I'm working now on the last volume of *Noomakhia* which is precisely dedicated to this argument. And I see more and more how proper Slavic tradition was different from almost everything we know from the *Chronicles*.

N: So, the *Primary Chronicles* are wrong?

D: No, absolutely not. They are right. But they reflect only a part. Only the highest level of life is described in the *Chronicles*. But it paid no attention at all to what happened at the lower level of the population. It shows the German-Sarmatian elite, their history, their time, their anthropological concept of subject…

Alex, momentarily distracted by the sights of the journey, spots a curious church.

D: Ah! Here is an Old Believers church.

N: It's beautiful. How old do you think it is?

D: I think it's 18th century, so not so old.

N: And it has the same cross as normal Orthodox churches?

D: Yes, it is an Old Believers cross. Few people know that this kind of cross, which is now more or less regarded as common in the Russian Orthodox Church, after Nikon's reform was considered to be a schismatic cross. And little by little, during the 18th century, the same cross as the Catholic Church was accepted as the normative. But during the 19th century the old cross was quietly reintroduced, because in the 18th century it had been prohibited. So, in the 19th century it came back with no explanation. This was a kind of symbolic victory for the Old Believers because it was the only cross they recognised as true.

N: It is curious that this happened in the 19th century, because arguably this was Russia's most European century.

D: Absolutely, Russia was much more European then than in the 18th century. But our history is not linear. There are very complex forms of time. It was a kind of big return that was passed over in silence.

N: For example, in terms of foreign policy, in the 19th century you were a key player in the Napoleonic Wars, in the Congress of Europe, you were one of the guarantors of peace in Europe, not to mention that your royalty and aristocracy were even more enmeshed with Europe then. You also competed with the British Empire in the 'Great Game' over Central and South Asia. So, in this sense you were very European in the 19th century.

D: Yes, we were one of the greatest European powers. And after the partition of Poland, we occupied half of Eastern Europe. But in the 19th century we were culturally much more conservative than in the 18th century. In the 18th century we were culturally more progressive, modernist, and Westernised.

N: But the 19th century was the 'Golden Age of Russian Literature' and this movement was massively influenced by Europe. For example, you can feel the influence of Byron in Pushkin's poems, and Turgenev's sympathies with Western liberalism, and Tolstoy's joyful and frequent use of French.

D: But at the same time, these Russian cultural figures were as well very patriotic and very nationalist. For example, Dostoevsky and Tolstoy were the two last entirely European figures. They were influenced by European culture and knew it very well. But they were also modern and anti–European as well. Pushkin on a lesser scale…

N: But, Pushkin loved Byron, who was arguably the poster boy of Western liberalism.

D: Yes, but our romantics were conservative. They had good relations with those authors in Europe who criticised modernity and the European lifestyle. So, Russian authors have chosen mostly the conservative revolutionary aspects of European culture. Especially the romantics, because they were in opposition to the bourgeois spirit of life.

N: But, what about language? As I noted earlier, Tolstoy, Turgenev and Pushkin with ease and relish just jump into French.

D: Yes, but it doesn't mean they were too much in favour of it, they used it as we are using English to speak about conservatism and so on. It was a kind of computer language which everybody uses to understand the comments on the computer. It doesn't mean that people know Byron. So, I think that their use of French was more or less like that.

N: Well, I'm not so sure that is the case. Pushkin in *Eugene Onegin* makes specific references to Byron, so I suspect he knew and liked his work. And in a few of Tolstoy's novels (like *Anna Karenina* and *War and Peace*) some aristocrats knew French better than Russian, thus demonstrating how deeply embedded it was in your culture at that stage.

D: Absolutely, because there was a gap between the Russian people and the elite. But Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Pushkin as well were on the side of people. It was a great discovery of the Russian people in the 19th century, first of all by Tolstoy, and then the other poets, artists, and musicians. And it was a great discovery because before that the people didn't exist. In the 18th century there is no mention of the people because they were slaves and servants; objects. So, Russian identity was discovered in the 19th century. This was a preparation for the 20th century because the next stage in referring to people's identity was very difficult and tragic. But the idea was to continue to discover the people.

N: I would say that this phenomenon was not just limited to Russia but was rather widespread in European historiography from the 19th century onwards. With the rise of secularism, liberalism and democracy, inevitably the focus of historical study started to move away from the Church and the elite, and towards the people instead.

D: Yes, but what is interesting is that in Russian history we see that the differences between the elite and the people from the very beginning were much greater than in Europe. And, if we study carefully Russian Christian tradition and Russian people's culture, we come to the interesting conclusion that there is a very different world vision between them. With a different understanding of what Logos is, what man is, what God is, what time is, what space is, what life is, what death is. Everything is completely different. And it is not only a reduced version of the official ideology; it is another ideology, the ideology of the Russian people. And it's clearly Slavic. The ideology of the elite is clearly German. And when we compare them we see two different worlds merged next to each other. We would discover the same in European history, but that line of separation is much less evident. And we couldn't find the criteria to understand that parallel history. So the study of Russian history is key to understanding the second part of European history as well because it's a kind of sign. For example, in a chemical reaction you put a sign inside and check the reaction for when it changes to that colour. We have an ethnic colour and tradition, and Russian Slavic tradition in the history of the Slavs is much clearer than in European history. After this we could project the same

methods, the same principles of that alternative vision and find it in the European peasantry. We lack the history of European peasantry. We know only about the kings and the Church. But there was a history, a kind of secret history, which affected the majority of the European population. It is very interesting. We know only the history of the minority. But the problem is that it was affected by Marxists. So, when Western historians try to create, or to establish an alternative history, they are working with exactly the same instruments as they use with the general history of kings and the Church. So they are projecting the same conception of man and time on a culture that conceives them differently. It is a kind of paranoid reconstruction of a false world. Rather, in order to understand the history of the peasantry, you should be completely free from the elite's vision. And it's almost impossible. Because democratic history is based on the same premises, and the same subject. But the cultural subject of the peasants is different. It is a completely colonial attitude toward its own population. It is a kind of pressing practise in front of the European population. And it was recognised as such at the time of official British racism, when they described 'white slaves' as 'the Other'. Exactly as colonialists say. So the Other is not the same or worse, but just a lower layer of the population. This conception — that they are not the same as aristocrats or lords — is a projection that completely misses this identity. When we try to treat the peasantry with the same projection, we miss everything because the peasants represent the organic version of humanity. And it is interesting that in the Balkans, in the Pre-Indo-European period, the Russian peasantry and European peasantry had the same cultural civilisation and ethnic origin. So agricultural tradition in its source and in its essence is Pre-Indo-European, and this is what unites Eastern Europe and Russia. And we've lost everything from this time: language, ethnicity, forms, everything. Except for some aspects of peasant life, and a tradition mostly linked to matriarchy. It is interesting that on one side there is a unity between Russia and Western Europe — on the level of the princes and elite (that is, the state). And there is also the organic unity of the peasantry. The level of the state we know very well, while on the level of the peasantry, we don't know so much. And we have no means or instruments to start this study. All our projections are racist, linear, progressive and so on. To understand the Other is a challenge which Western culture cannot solve.

N: How do we know that your approach is going to solve it?

D: First of all, my method and my approach is based on an entirely new anthropological attitude which tries to start from the position that there is no hierarchy between cultures; that is, between old, savage or developed cultures. So, complexity is not a mark of a more developed or less developed culture. A more complex or simple culture, both are possible. The label of 'more developed' or 'less developed' doesn't make sense, as 'developed' assumes linearity. But the reality of culture is simultaneous. And we anthropologists agree to apply this rule to the study of different tribes, but not to

the study of our own society. Anthropology has a sort of colonial approach which is humanistic and which does not apply its own standards to itself. With Europe it's more difficult because almost all archaic content of European culture won't translate onto modernity. Almost all. But in Russia there is a middle situation. There is much less that is archaic than in, let's say, Africa. But it is much easier to distinguish this line than in Europe. So with the help of Russia as a kind of methodical key, this is possible, and only after studying other civilisations could you return to the study of Western European society. Without this turn studying archaic people, the colonisation process at least on the intellectual level, and most important — after understanding the complexity of Russia, that is nevertheless much more clear and evident than in Europe — only after that you could create something more correct, based on a pure subject, and not only an operation of the same subject. That is precisely modern Western Europe, which is a kind of product of the elitist approach of development. But this is only a small part of not only humanity but the West as well. And that is a kind of pure racism of the modern West. It is using the normative construction of the minority and pretending that it is universal, necessary, normative including for all other countries — this is a question of colonisation. But the same error is repeated regarding these same more developed European societies which are again completely misinterpreted by Western racism. Here the racism is applied to yourself and with the same attitude.

The journey trundles on and on, and the vast Russian countryside opens up before our eyes, while our thoughts turn again to the history of this intriguing country.

D: Vladimir was created as a capital by the Grand Prince Andrey Bogolyubsky. He transferred the capital from Kiev to Vladimir. And this was the beginning of a completely different identity, a post–Kievan identity and the beginning of the turn to Moscow. Moscow was a small city in the Vladimir county (the lands of the Great Prince). It was something like a kingdom but we had a different concept, it was not a kingdom but…

N: A principality?

D: Yes, a principality; it was a great principality. And Kievan Rus was a great principality with its capital in Kiev where the Great Prince lived. But, with Andrey Bogolyubsky in the 12th century there was a transfer of the capital of the older Kievan-Rus state to Vladimir. It is interesting that from the very beginning in Russia we had a different kind of political system. Novgorod was a boyar oligarchy almost in the European way, like the Dutch Republic or the Greek city-states…

N: Or the Italian city-states, like Florence and Venice.

D: Yes.

N: That is, they are built on merchants and trade.

D: Absolutely, with a very weak power of the prince or duke. And it is interesting that Western Russia, containing Galitchina, had an aristocratic type of society, just like in Poland or Hungary, with a duke as well, without much power but with a very powerful aristocracy of nobles (not merchants). It was not an oligarchy but a military aristocracy. But, a third type of society was precisely the paradigm of Vladimir. There was a prince with very strong friends who destroyed the power of the boyars, oligarchs and indeed his own family in order to have no competitors. And these were the steps taken in order to found Vladimir. And the founding of Vladimir was a pre-figuration of all our history.

N: What period are we talking about here?

D: It was in 1170.

N: Ok, the 12th century

D: Yes. There was a fight, because before, in Kiev, there had been a kind of synthesis. The prince had a very important role and the aristocracy were very powerful, while the oligarchy was less powerful.

N: So, Grand Prince Vladimir's form of rulership wasn't the model for the Tsar, as the Tsar was the most powerful and not the aristocracy or oligarchy?

D: It was the model, but it was a different type of society. Grand Prince Vladimir had a *druzhina* — a kind of military aristocracy — around him, so he needed to take them into consideration, and the Kievan *veche* — the democratic-oligarchic assembly. But he had to fight with his brother and so on. The new paradigm of Andrey Bogolyubsky (who founded the city of Vladimir), and to some extent his father Yury Dolgoruky, was based on the unique power of the prince against the boyars and the oligarchs. But what is interesting is that this was with support from the free peasants. The peasants were invited from the other parts of Russia and given liberty and land. And this was the most important support of the Russian Eastern Vladimir paradigm of Russia. So, a very strong king with free peasants, and limited power of the boyars and oligarchs. It was limited by taking the serfs away from them and giving the lands to the nobles not for eternity, but only in exchange for their services. After that it was applied universally by other Muscovites. This is the basis of Russian history. And this wasn't the case in Western Russia and partly in Belorussia. They didn't have such a paradigm; they historically fought against such a paradigm. They were much more influenced by Eastern Europe, by Hungary and Poland, who had another paradigm. That is why they were a part of Europe long before Ukraine ever started to exist. It is a very long history. And it is also interesting that the roots of what is going on in Ukraine now go back a long way in our history, so it is not new. The psychology of Western Russia is very different from the very beginning. It's the same people, the same ethnicity, the same language, the same origins, but the cultural type is very different, and this has been the case for many centuries.

N: In what way are the cultural types different?

D: For example, if you are a free peasant with an almost divine Tsar — this is one paradigm. It's a social public service. So everything that you do is a public service, everything. So the state is a Tsar, and not a law for example. And there is no distribution of the hierarchy of competences. Everybody serves, including the boyars and aristocrats.

N: So it's the Tsar and everyone else?

D: Yes, absolutely. And there is nobody in between. And for Western Russia this psychology is impossible. They have a kind of balance of dignities and privileges which they trade and distribute, as in Poland for example. That is their way to organise society and it is precisely this difference which they hate in us. They are of a different cultural type. They think that the organised state is there to serve them. And Moscow was a very small town. It belonged to some boyar called 'Kuchka', who was killed by Andrey Bogolyubsky. People say that it was actually by Yury Dolgoruky, but that is quite impossible because he was ruling in Kiev. And then Kuchka's descendants killed Andrey Bogolyubsky. That was the reward of the boyars. This was against the order of Andrey Bogolyubsky. So he was a martyr.

N: And this system then broke down?

D: They tried to overcome it and after the death of Andrey Bogolyubsky there was a kind of temptation to return to Rostov–Suzdal and to diminish the importance of Vladimir. But this time the population of Vladimir saved the paradigm by inviting Andrey's brother Vsevolod to rule exactly as Andrey wanted. So this initiative came from below, from the lower echelons of the population. After this boyar's revolution, the common people restored Vladimir's paradigm. And it is interesting that the Zemsky Sobor some centuries after was the same as when the monarchy was established by the people. And this was also Vladimir's paradigm. The Zemsky Sobor which elected Romanov was a historical continuation of Vladimir's paradigm.

N: But what happened when Russia fell under the Mongolian yoke? Surely, they couldn't effectively continue this paradigm during this period?

D: Why not?

N: Well, because the Mongolians were really in charge and not the Tsar, he was only their puppet.

D: Yes, but the Mongolians were considered as Emperors or Tsars. And the Mongolians preserved the position of the Grand Duke, who had to pay a tribute to them. But he was almost free in his…

N: So, are you saying the Tsar was no longer Russian then? And the boyars knew if they wanted to get rid of their formal Russian leader, the Grand Duke, they could just plot with the Mongols to do so.

D: That's impossible. Because they were not so united and their power was not so strong then, especially in Eastern Russia. The only plotting against the Grand Duke was possible only by the other dukes, for example, Ryazan. So, it was inside the family of the dukes. Only the dukes (and not the boyars) were able to trade with the Mongols.

N: Not the boyars, ok. But, as I said, at the end of the day the Mongols were really in charge, and the Russian Tsar was no longer predominant.

D: There was no Tsar yet.

N: But you mentioned that in Eastern Russia there was this paradigm of the Tsar and everyone else. And so with the advent of the Mongols, surely this paradigm collapsed because it wasn't just the Tsar and the rest, but also the Mongols. So, there were three competing interest groups.

D: Yes, but formally the Mongol Khan was considered to be a kind of Byzantine emperor. He was recognised in terms of hierarchy. For example, the Grand Dukes didn't recognise the concrete power of the Byzantine Empire, but they did recognise it to be higher than they were. It was the same with the Great Khan. It was thought of as an imperial structure above the state.

N: I can see this structural link, but the military link was different. The Byzantines didn't have soldiers on the ground, and so they couldn't easily change things they didn't like. However, if the Mongols didn't like the leader, they could easily change him for a more compliant one.

D: The Mongols used the army only in the first stage of the conquest.

N: And also if they didn't like the leader later on? Or if he didn't pay the tax?

D: Yes. But normally the princes paid the tax. And they collected it by themselves. So the Mongolian army was a kind of special merchants unit in order to help the dukes collect the taxes. There was no direct collection of the tax in any situation. The tax collectors were the dukes and all of them were Russian, they were a continuation of Russian Varyags, the Vikings. It was a Viking group collecting the taxes. And military regiments were sent only in order to solve the problems between the dukes. But this was very rare. Or to help them to collect the tax when there was a revolt.

N: Do you believe that the Russians were independent during that period?

D: Much more than we think.

N: Because it sounds to me very much like the Roman Empire.

D: Not so much.

N: This empire was perhaps slightly looser in structure but still very similar. For example, the Romans had military garrisons stationed throughout the empire which were there to keep law and order and to ensure that the taxes were collected (often by locals) and delivered safely to Rome.

D: But our borders were defended by Russians and our taxes were collected by Russians. In the Roman Empire the Romans defended the borders and collected the

taxes, not the Germans for example. It was a Mongolian Empire. It was not exactly the Roman or Byzantine Empire. It was a Steppe empire and Russians were considered to be Mongols in some way. The Mongols were a dynasty. The Mongols were the minority and the Turks (Turkish tribes) were the majority, but the Turks had no ethnic consciousness. For the Mongols, the Russians were the same as Turks.

N: What you just said is a clever way to keep an empire; that is, when you have people doing their own things it keeps them quiet, and makes them believe they are autonomous. But, nevertheless it's an empire and there are colonies. And the Romans also allowed locals to collect taxes, think of St Matthew. And, for example, French and German people who had gained Roman citizenship also fought in the Roman legions; that was key to being part of the Roman Empire.

D: Interestingly, when the Golden Horde turned to Islam they preserved Genghis Khan's principles and didn't introduce Sharia law to the states they controlled. In fact, they didn't do anything to affect Russian autonomy or culture…

N: Again, it's like the Romans they didn't interfere with the Jewish traditions and faith…

D: Yes, but in the Islamic world that was very rare. The same was only in Northern India, where the Islamic rulers did more or less the same thing, but more radically. Mongolian (Golden Horde) Islam was a very peaceful and tolerant Islam, and was unique in this sense. After the fall of the Golden Horde, Russia preserved this attitude towards Islam. So, Muslims were very easily integrated and tolerated when there was a shift in power. This didn't exist before.

N: What was the purpose of the Golden Horde? Why was such an empire founded, for what reason?

D: It existed from the time of Genghis Khan. And it was a kind of miracle because in thirty years, from a small and poor, tribe they created the greatest empire in the world, which was based on the principle of absolute loyalty to the chief, and with no material concerns. So it was an anti-material empire.

N: Why were they collecting taxes then, if you say they were not materialistic?

D: The idea was war. To them 'conquest' was Alpha and Omega. But to conquer you need to have some resources. So, you take resources in order to conquer. But conquest is first and resources are second.

N: So, you say war was their principal concern. But then for what purpose was this war? Why was it worth the sacrifice of blood and treasure?

D: In order to expand and to fight.

N: Again, to expand and fight for what?

D: It is a kind of a war for the sake of war, and expansion for the sake of expansion. And this is not so much Mongolian, it is Turanian.

N: It also sounds a bit like Alexander the Great with his 'Orbis non sufficit' lust of conquering.

D: Absolutely, it is the same. And in my books I describe it as the Logos of 'Turan' and I trace this tradition back to the Sarmatians, to the Altai, and to the Huns. It's a completely different way of reasoning than what we are generally used to. The idea is to expand like the sun. For example, why is the sun so bright? Because it expands its rays, and it can't help doing so. The men who follow the Logos of Turan have this same solar attitude. So, if you are a man you should fight and promote your presence. This is the essence of Turanian enlightenment: to promote your presence, and your presence is infinite. There is no other goal or mission. This is precisely the case for the Indo-Europeans. Indo-Europeans are exactly the same as the Mongols in this sense. The Mongols were not so very different. They were purely Indo-European because the Indo-European motherland was precisely in the Steppes, in Turan. And the Mongols received this tradition to expand and to kill and to fight. Normally, when you fight for something, once you achieve it, you stop fighting. But in order to expand universally you shouldn't have a goal to achieve. It's an idea of open aggression, which created in just thirty years an empire that destroyed the Persian and Chinese empires and the Russian states.

N: Is this Logos generally found in the people of a nation or only/mainly in individuals?

D: It is divine.

N: Maybe, but you could argue it's probably more about divine individuals (like Alexander the Great and Attila the Hun) than the people in general.

D: Yes, but divine people are individuals and a society of individuals are two sides of the same anthropological figure which we could call God or Man. For a Christian it's not so important because we have Christ. This is why Christianity, I think, is so successful, because it corresponds absolutely to the most basic figures and paradigms of the Indo-European tradition more than any other artificial construction of Roman or Greek paganism. I think that in a way Christianity is more pagan than paganism.

N: Sorry, in what way?

D: In a way it was more original because of the idea of the Father and the Son being the same, and the Father is always transcendent and the Son is both transcendent and mortal (and dies) and immanent and human at the same time — this is the essence of the Indo-European world vision. And this is much older than any other form of pagan tradition, it is the essence. So, the very essence was put at the centre of Christian dogma. And Christian dogma is, in a way, Semitic…

N: …Zoroastrian?

D: Yes. It is the Iranians who came from Turan, it's Eurasian. In a way Genghis Khan continued that Iranian, Indo-European, Turanian tradition.

N: So, is this desire to expand one's influence and dominate people indicative of a Dionysian Logos? Because Dionysus was a great conqueror.

D: It's a kind of Apollonian–Dionysian dynamic. Because there is a strong purely transcendent father in alliance with a transcendent-immanent son. So, the Son is Dionysian and the Father is Apollonian. But they are working together in a positive relationship. And this creates a great concentration of *transcendental immanence*. There is no pure immanence. For example, in Chinese culture there is pure immanence, but with no materialism. It is interesting, so it is purely Dionysian, and there is no other culture like this. Except maybe some Pygmies in Africa, or maybe a little bit the Aztec and Mayan civilisations. But still a purely Dionysian Logos is found only in China.

N: In your view, what is the essence of their civilisation?

D: Recently I was in China and I noticed that Chinese civilisation is based on balance. For example, if you have one spiritual point, it should be immediately corrected by one material point. And if there is one more material point it should be compensated immediately by one more spiritual point.

N: But one could say that today China is entirely dominated by a materialist capitalist/communist outlook. Spiritual matters don't seem to play a very large role at all.

D: No, no, it's a kind of extralimital. They have no matter. The concept of 'The Good' is not found in matter. It is a kind of 'Eidos'. So, 'Good' is not material. Good is a mediation. The mediation of goods is an accumulation of science. Their accumulation of goods is only for one purpose: to distribute them among the Chinese people. So it is not the materialistic growth of individual riches, but a system to keep everybody in balance.

N: But, there are quite a lot of billionaires and millionaires these days in China.

D: Yes, I have spoken to some billionaires, for example with Erik, the owner of half of Silicon valley. My Dutch friend said to Erik, 'You've constructed capitalism here, why are you linked to communism and Maoism?' And he replied, 'You know why I'm not into capitalism? Because I'm nothing. The party is everything. All I have is my culture, my Chinese civilisation, my state, my country and my people. So I am zero. And if I was invited to a be a party leader in Shanghai where I own almost all the buildings in the centre I would tremble as a leaf in autumn and not be proud as Trump or any other American millionaire would be. I would tremble as the last peasant because I'm just a humble representative of my country.'

N: That is all very well to say. But at the same time he enjoys all the benefits of the individualist, capitalist system in America. For example, he can choose his position in life, he has mansions, the finest possessions, excellent education for his kids, etc. So, is this statement not hypocritical?

D: He is not affected by this. He speaks fluent English, he's very well known around the world, but his capitalist, individualist, materialist, globalist attitude is only on the surface. Behind it is something completely different: a strong nationalist Confucian traditionalist Chinese identity. There was also a professor from Yale who lived for forty years in the US, had American citizenship and gave lessons there. So, he's working and living in the United States, but he is completely communist, Chinese and a patriot. For him his reality is China, so he's living there, while sharing formally the protocols of Western civilisation, but he's in no way affected by it.

N: You might have a point, I have noticed myself that even in multicultural London the Chinese tend to stick together and maintain a sort of inner Chinese essence.

D: And when they pretend not to be Chinese, they are still Chinese. You cannot change it because it's their Logos and it's so strong. The absolute majority of them are like this. They can't change their identity because the geometry of their identity is constructed differently. They are not against Western identity, because they don't understand its essence. The other thing I was astonished about was when I asked professor Jean in Shanghai which European authors are most popular now in China, and he replied, 'All of us are falling under the influence of two authors: Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt.' So, in two words he has explained to me why Plato was wrong and Heidegger is right. So, for me Heidegger is a Dionysian philosopher.

N: That reminds me of the famous story of the late Chinese premier Zhou Enlai, who was once asked to comment on the implications of the French Revolution, and he replied, 'It's too early to say.'

D: Exactly. And it's more than that. The Chinese have a completely different concept of time.

N: What is their concept of time?

D: Cyclical, it's Dionysian. Their history is something which repeats itself, and is opposite to the modern Western concept of linear time, which consists of irreversible and unique events. For China, time is like the seasons, which repeat themselves. So repetition of the same is history. But it is not history at all. So with his comment 'it's too early to say' he tried to describe the event from a seasonal perspective. For example, what is the event of the French Revolution? Is it a kind of rain, snow, or maybe summer heat? We need to find its meaning in the season. And the big seasons, the cycles, are of a different sign.

N: What season do they think it is now?

D: It's China season.

N: You mean the season of Chinese dominance? It's interesting that for several centuries now they have been profoundly influenced by the West in terms of their ideology, politics, and military…

D: Yes, but they have managed to transform everything into a Chinese version. They are a simulacrum of the West, but they are not Western. It is not easy to understand. And I think that now their example provides a very important argument for *multipolarity*. They are not so much hegemonic, they are locally hegemonic.

N: But, maybe they are just using multipolarity and local hegemony as stepping stones in order to achieve greater control and perhaps even global hegemony?

D: I don't think so because their culture is multipolar in itself.

N: But you said they don't accept 'the Other'?

D: But neither do they reject it. To not accept doesn't mean reject.

For example, now in dealing with the 'One Belt One Road' initiative they should change this attitude, but it takes time; now they need twenty to thirty years to think about this idea. It is a great pity. This is why they have decided to leave Xi Jinping in power for a long time in order to have time to think. They take the thinking process very seriously. For example, you previously mentioned Tony Blair and his correct but childish and naive remarks, which are a perfect example of putting into practice the first things that come into your mind — it's very dangerous. And China is quite the opposite. They could think about a very simple idea for a century and then act.

N: And how do you think China is responding to Trump at the moment?

D: They think Trump is scum. Seriously, for them he is a kind of temporary rain.

N: Do you think he will have a second term?

D: Quite possible. He is doing well, and he exists in a post-modern world where anything can happen. He is a kind of anti-hero like Beavis and Butt-Head. He says stupid things and then he insists and then he wins. And they become more and more stupid with him. While the discourse of his opponents is an act of organised stupidity. But Trump's formal and original stupidity is individual.

N: So, essentially you think that China is just sitting back and waiting for the rain to clear, as it were?

D: I think these matters are very serious in China, much more serious than in Russia. Russia is fragile compared to China. China will continue its line and will certainly destroy unipolar hegemony. It's impossible for us to do likewise. For example, Russia could be broken and even destroyed and thus provide unipolarity the opportunity to continue for a little bit longer. But for China, it is the time for their hegemony. It's the end of the world dominated by the West. And this is serious. China is the second most powerful economy. It is very successful and has a very long term strategy. So we are on the edge and could disappear, but China will stay.

N: In many ways China is actually more dangerous to you than the West is. Is Russia prepared to be eaten up by China?

D: Yes. But, I'm more and more disappointed by the Russian capacity to think. Thought, any kind of thought, has gone from our society. Maybe this is the result of

materialism and communism. We had a very idealistic interpretation of communism. Now we have a materialistic interpretation of post-communism. So something is wrong with Russia. And this is serious. We have lost a kind of line of Truth. Absolutely. So we can't fight. We are out of Truth. We act and think in the wrong way towards ourselves, not with the others. We are lying to ourselves.

N: Yes, I saw that you did an interesting interview with the BBC in which you said that Russia has its own special Truth, a Russian Truth. And I remember the BBC reporter being rather amazed and confused by this idea. What exactly did you mean?

D: That Truth is local, and only a Lie is universal.

N: What do you mean by that?

D: It means that we could agree only on a lie. I mean alienation. In respect to ourselves we refer to something individual, something special — and this is Truth. Because this is a particularity of our identity. Identity is always local. And Russian Truth is something that has to do with Russian identity. It will be weakened if we do not take this into consideration. It is a pure simulacrum if everybody could agree, precisely because it doesn't exist, so it's a lie. We could agree only on a lie and nothing else.

N: What is Russian identity? Could you please give a definition of it which everyone would agree on in Russia?

D: You shouldn't agree on identity; identity agrees with you. It's something that gives language, culture, life, body, soul, time, space, God and man — everything. This is identity.

N: The majority of modern Western people would disagree with this definition.

D: The majority is always wrong. And people always think wrongly in terms of themselves. It is an illusion. It is a lie because it is not itself. Heidegger called it *das Man*. They are not *Sein*, people who are thinking, but *das Man*; that is, people who are pretending to think, or people who imitate the thinking process in spite of the self. The self has a very special relationship with *Dasein*, more so than with *das Man*. This is a definition which shouldn't be agreed upon. Russian truth is something that isn't given; it is a process. A process of affirmation and exploration of the Self. The Self is not an easy thing to find. It requires a man's effort, and then the man changes his regime of existence from the outside, the outer world to the inner-world. As Plotinus said, in order to understand the Truth you should close your eyes. Because outside of the Self there is nothing. This is interesting. When people close their eyes, they contact the Self. And this is Russian Truth. Russian Truth is hiding inside these closed eyes, in this moment. And it is the same for other people.

N: That's what I was about to say — it's quite general and you can apply these criteria almost universally.

D: Absolutely

N: So, it's not just a Russian Truth, it's a universal truth.

D: Russian Truth is that each people has its own Truth. And this is Russian because we have recognised this fact.

N: Isn't this just relativism?

D: No, it's solipsism. In Italy I recently spoke to a Dominican about this. I said to him that there are many absolutes. And he said, 'That's quite impossible. There is only one absolute. And all the rest is relativity. What is the absolute? It is Catholic dogma.' I said, 'I can't agree with you, but I understand it is right for *your* culture. In our culture we recognise only seven ecumenical and universal councils and no more. But the Pope said that we should recognise the other councils and that they should be valid for us too. In that case I responded "no". You *should* recognise universal truth only in seven councils. And we clearly are speaking about recognising the absolute within the limits of our own faith. We could either tolerate the "absolute truth" of the other, or not tolerate, or pretend that only our truth is universal Truth and is absolute.' And that's the difference. So the Russian attitude is much more detailed and with far more dialectical answers. And we could recognise that Catholics have a kind of pride in thinking that way. But Catholics can't recognise the Orthodox. Maybe we think the same about the Catholics, but not with the same radicalism. We somehow allow the other absolute to exist. But the other absolute doesn't let us exist. So, this is what Russian Truth is.

After our lengthy discourse we stopped for a quick bite to eat. Alexander was pleased that we found a traditional Russian eatery. After a tasty morsel or two, we headed back to the road to continue our philosophical discussion on Asia.

N: What is Japanese Logos?

D: That's interesting. On the one hand it's a continuation of the Chinese Logos. So, a direct reflection of the Chinese. That is the highest point. But there is also something that is pre–Chinese. This is much more Cybelian and it creates the conflicted identity of Japanese culture. There is a kind of dialogue in their Buddhism, because being Indo–European it reflects a much more Apollonian identity. Because the Japanese took their Buddhism from China, not from India there was a very strong Dionysian influence from Taoism and Confucianism. So this is the Apollonian–Dionysian aspect, which is fully Indian and Chinese, and properly Japanese and Cybelian. There is a great schizophrenic separation in Japanese culture between these two parts. They are not united, they are not harmonised, and this is a very Confucian culture. A little bit similar to Anglo–Saxon culture.

N: Really? Because from the outside looking in, they seem far more coherent and united than say the British are.

D: Yes, but inside their culture there is a big gap between these two sides. It is a very sick culture. By the way, before I started to study Japanese Logos I was much more in

favour of Japanese culture than Chinese. But I came to the conclusion that I only had a superficial vision of Japanese culture because inside it is very dramatic and sick. It is torn apart by different poles, and not harmonised. There is a very strong materialistic Cybelian pole which isn't in Chinese culture, except maybe in some Austroasiatic elements in the south of China. But there are not many of them in China, the Chinese Han identity has overcome them and they are almost totally integrated with the other pole. In Japanese culture there is a problematic attitude towards femininity which is a sign of this disharmony. The misogynistic attitude of the Japanese is based on fear and hatred towards women. That is a sign of the power of women. Because normally female principles are integrated or sublimated. But where there is a phobia or a kind of struggle, this is a sign of strong Cybelian outlines.

N: I thought that the Cybelian influence manifests itself where there is female dominance?

D: Yes, but there is a kind of fragile patriarchy based on the submission of the Cybelian Logos. When this Logos is still very strong and powerful and there is fighting inside of the society, formally this is patriarchy.

N: Apollonian patriarchy?

D: Formally. But in essence it's very fragile and superficial because there is a kind of informal aggression inside from the Cybelian Logos. The real balance in this Logos is not formal. We couldn't say that the Cybelian Logos dominates only where there is a matriarchy. Matriarchy is its purest form, but in such a form it has never historically existed. Maybe, for example, in the Fiji islands there is still a matriarchal society. But the real matriarchy we are dealing with is crypto-matriarchy, which is hidden; that is, it is working inside patriarchal societies and demands that we pay more attention to myths, culture, legends, philosophy and poetry. So, it is not easy, it is not a formal approach. The Cybelian Logos has existed in a pure form before patriarchy but it exists always in the hidden form.

N: And what is the link between the divine Emperor and samurai culture?

D: The Emperor was considered to be the direct descendant of the sun goddess, this is Apollonian. And samurai culture was different; it was against the Emperor.

N: Against? I thought the samurai were the servants of the Emperor?

D: There was a kind of protest, and finally they had to use power. During the samurai era they took the Emperor hostage. And they were much more aristocratic than the monarchy and more feminine. Samurai culture is not so masculine as it seems to be. But the most important and interesting thing in Japanese culture is Buddhism and it's completely Chinese…

N: What about Shintoism, their own native religion?

D: Yes. It is partly Malayan in its roots and partly Korean. The Korean aspect is solar and Apollonian, but the Malayan in Shintoism is matriarchal but not openly. The

Buddhist layer of Japanese culture is harmonious and balanced because it is Chinese.

N: Some people I know living in Japan say that most Japanese people are not religious at all. For them religion is just a series of claps and bows at temples while the deeper spiritual meaning of their faith is completely lost on them or treated as a kind of fantasy.

D: I think that Western people believe that to be religious means to be like them. I think that this is just another form of Western racist paranoia. Because we think to be religious means to be religious like us. A temple for them is not the same as a temple for us. The religious dimension is a part of their life. The sacred is not so much strictly separated as in our case. And it is not a profanation of the temple but a sacralisation of life. We see it as a kind of desacralisation of the temple but we don't see the other parts. So, something that for us is purely profane, for the Japanese is sacred. For example, at any given corner there is a small temple. One small statue of a god or a saint is considered to be a temple. For the Japanese the difference between a big temple and small temple doesn't exist. For them a small temple is still a temple, and this is a sign. For example, I was in Japan and I passed by one street in Kyoto and my friend, a mathematician, showed me two small stones, completely ordinary stones, and he said, 'ah, this is a small sacred garden'. So, for the Japanese these small stones are holy, the artificial relations between two stones could signify a god and a temple. So, if you are living in a garden with two stones which you consider to be a temple you certainly understand reality differently than we do.

N: Where does this conception come from?

D: I think it's Chinese. For them space is sacred. So any kind of small example of nature is a sacred temple, a god. There is no difference between society and nature, this distinction doesn't exist because everything is culture and everything is nature. So nature and culture are the same, exactly the same, and this is sacred; sacred space, sacred time, sacred seasons, etc. And what is not sacred is what you've touched, something artificially organised. It is recognised as such. The act of recognition of the sacred is a basic act of Chinese culture. And this is why the fish in water is the same as God in heaven. And there is the history of the fish that failed to recognise direction and came to heaven simply because the fish forgot his sense of orientation. Because if you miss the sense of orientation you can get anywhere. So, God in heaven and the fish in the water are the same in this respect. Two stones or a small temple and a big temple are like that too. But this is a Chinese cultural influence, and not Japanese in essence.

N: Surely their obsession with perfection is a uniquely Japanese trait?

D: This is Japanese. It is not so spiritual, but rather placing a particular importance towards matter. And this is Cybelian. The Japanese are very attracted to small things, to a kind of micro world, which is a real sign of the Great Mother. The Chinese are not so impressed by the micro. It is a sign of a Cybelian civilisation to focus on tiny matters.

But the Chinese always take a middle course; that is, focusing on the not too small or too big. Whereas the Japanese are attracted by small details. And this is precisely why they have so many gods. If you have too many gods, it's too much, it's too material. These gods coincide with material particles, they stop uniting with reality; rather, they coincide with a reality that falls apart. This is acceptance of attention paid to details. And I think this is a kind of Japanese hubris. It is Chinese as well, they are very…

N: But how does this square with their concept of Wabi-sabi, their celebration and observance of imperfection and transience?

D: So, there are two aspects. The other aspect is called Zazen theory which is purely Chinese. This is a Chinese Buddhist idea that there is nothing which is of no importance. Everything has its importance. You're just sitting and it's important to do that properly. It's important to make tea properly. It's important to prepare domestic life properly. And there are no details that are unimportant. You should live your existence fully, but there is this little semantic difference. A particular attention is paid to everything as if it were sacred and filled with the greatest spiritual importance — 'Satori' or Enlightenment. This declaration of the Tao is Chinese. But when it becomes a kind of obsession with details, this is purely Malayan. This slight semantic shift reveals the difference of Logos prevailing in the culture. It is very small. You could interpret the same importance given to details in a purely Chinese Zen Buddhist way, and then you could add a small semantic shift to Malayan Logos and then it becomes a kind of obsession. So, these are very small differences, but they change everything.

N: Why then in the late 19th century did the Japanese develop an imperialist conquering attitude?

D: That was purely European. The Chinese were obliged to do the same, but they resisted. The Japanese were too weak to resist against this racism, precisely because they were unbalanced, so they accepted this European sickness. Because to repay is the same as to be sick in a paranoid way; and the Japanese inherited it, but the Chinese resisted it.

N: How could they resist and the Japanese couldn't?

D: Because their inner identity was more unbalanced than the Chinese. The Logos of Cybele was much stronger in the Japanese than in the Chinese. And European modernity is Cybelian.

N: Could you please give a full definition of the three (Apollonian, Dionysian and Cybelian) Logoi?

D: The first book of my *Noomakhia* series is fully dedicated to these three Logoi and discusses them at length with illustrations from philosophical, religious and cultural texts. It is interesting as well that in China I made a speech about what a multipolar world should be. And I pointed to a kind of tour of a pre-Columbian world, a return to the pre–Columbian world. So, Europe was multipolar before Columbus. The

Columbian world brought forth colonists, modernists, universalists, and was titanic. Before this, Europe was European with all its pluses and minuses. And there was also the Mongolian Empire, as well as the Ottoman Empire, the Persian Empire, the Chinese Empire, and the Russian Empire. And so there was a kind of balance. The real problem began with Columbus; not with him personally, but with the Columbian age. The concept of irreversible time was also post-Columbian. Multipolarity is a return to the pre-Columbian age. How is a return possible? It is possible if we distance ourselves from the post-Columbian age. Because Columbian time has brought this linearity; that is, progress and so on. Everything was more less in order with multiple Logoi, their differences and their balance, universalities and local absolutes were recognised as such and tolerated. But everything was destroyed with colonisation. And colonisation was a two-way phenomenon. It was a colonisation of the 'Other' and the colonisation of the 'Self'. So, the West not only exported itself to the Other, but destroyed itself, and betrayed its own identity. Its exportation was as well a lie about its own identity. It was not only a conquest of the Other, but it was a kind of loss of itself. The same with America; it is said that America gained the world but lost itself. This was a repetition of the destiny or the decision made by Western Europe beforehand. But the Portuguese and Spanish Empires, in spite of everything, were within their limits, their limit was the British Empire. As Carl Schmitt said, the Spanish and Portuguese still followed the concept of the Land Power because they considered…

N: But, they were just like the British in that they were great Sea Empires focused on maritime trade and expansion overseas — from India to Asia and the Americas. For example, the empire of Charles V in Europe was built on the basis of gold from South America. And they used the Treaty of Tordesillas in 1494 to divide the 'New World' of the Americas between them. The main difference I can see between these empires and the British was that the former were Catholic, while the latter was protestant.

D: But they still considered the newly conquered territory as *provinces* and not *colonies*.

N: What is the difference? Isn't this just semantics?

D: The difference is that provinces were considered to be part of the Land. So the Sea was just an inner lake. So, for them Latin America was a continuation of the Iberian peninsula, and this is why there was the kingdom of Peru and Mexico, and why there was as well the possibility of transferring the capital of Portugal to Brazil in the 19th century. But what's interesting is that their main attitude followed a continental paradigm. And only the British after their victory over the Spanish Armada made a kind of step outside of that paradigm and identified themselves as a Sea Power. They made a big *transgression of civilisation*. So, the Sea was subordinate to the Land in the case of the previous empires. Carl Schmitt's theory of opposition between the Land and the Sea, I think, is very insightful and provides a very thin explanation of this. Because one thing

is to be a power with a fleet, that may possess provinces outside of the main Land (Spain), and another thing is to accept the Sea and the Water as an inner paradigm, as something that is unchanging, borderless and can be used as a tool for global domination as Britain did. And this is the difference between Protestant North America and Catholic South America. Now we see that Latin America is still more or less traditional. Whereas North America is purely modern. So the difference is reflected in the destinies of the colonies as well, and not only…

N: …that reminds me of a very interesting link between Latin America and London. In Belgrave Square there is a curious statue of Simón Bolívar, the man who famously overthrew the Spanish Empire in colonial Latin America. So, even in Latin America they still inherited modern Western 'Enlightenment' ideas and had their own freedom fighters against colonialism…

D: But this was supported by the Anglo-Saxons. They supported this project of modernity by Bolívar. There was also the idea to create a kind of continuation of the United States, a United States of the South, based again on a republican order, which did not exactly reflect the particular identity of Latin America. Inside of this newly Pan-American nationalism were two aspects: one was modernist and the other was peculiar to Latin America. And I followed this rather complex situation in my book on the Logos of Latin America.

N: But on the question of Sea Power, I would argue that there is rarely a pure Land Power or a pure Sea Power, especially when it concerns great powers. For example, Ancient Sparta, which was principally a Land Power, had to become a Sea Power as well in order to defeat the Athenians. And even the Soviet Union, perhaps, the greatest Land Power of the 20th century, paid significant attention to the development and maintenance of its maritime fighting capabilities.

D: Absolutely! But here Carl Schmitt explains precisely that to develop a fleet or control the sea is one thing, but to come to the side of the Sea, of the Water is another. It is not strategic domination of the sea, but a civilisation's choice. This is the essence of geopolitics. So, geopolitics is about civilisation and Logos, much more than strategy. This is explained in Carl Schmitt's book *Land and Sea*. It is very interesting that he was the first to propose such an interpretation of geopolitics that corresponds to the *civilisation of choice* much more than strategy…

N: What does he mean by the *civilisation of choice*?

D: For Carl Schmitt, Land is a special space where the borders are both stable and fixed. It is the image of a conservative society, where Chaos is tamed and borders and hierarchy offer a kind of stability, a fixed principle. If you considered the Sea from the Land, you would think it is the Other. And you could pass through the Other. In order to meet the Self on the other coast — with order, hierarchy, and meeting with the same. So, you go to the other coast through the Other to meet with the Same. It is the Earth. And

that is the 'Nomos[10] of the Earth'. The Sea is an absence of fixity, of borders, of hierarchy; it is an ever changing current. Indeed, the only principle is *change*. So, you are dynamic and are always developing. You have no stability, no hierarchy. You are a pirate; it's classical. You are fighting against everyone while having no homeland and living in the sea. The sea with its fishes is not where you can domesticate, especially with a purely male crew on the ship. It's a new civilisation with no borders, no hierarchies, and equality in all directions. When you are on the open sea, you have no restrictions, you can go anywhere. And you are always involved in the elements of the water. You can choose the land or the sea. Land is eternity, and the Sea is time. Land is conservatism, the Sea is progress. Land is hierarchy, the Sea is democracy. This is according to Schmitt. Developing a fleet could lead one to going over to the side of the sea or it might not. For example, when the Chinese Emperor first started to develop his fleet. In the 15th century his fleet was much more developed, beautiful and stronger than that of the Europeans. But the emperor noticed that social conditions in the sea ports, where his ships were developed, were damaged morally because there were too many foreigners and the seamen were loosing their morality by being intimately involved in this new space. So, he made the order to destroy the entire fleet. And he destroyed it regardless of the material consequences, but precisely because its existence lead to moral corruption. Or, for example, the Chinese developed gun powder and used it for centuries in fireworks and not to kill each other. The Europeans developed their fleet in order to conquer the Other. And they corrupted everybody with their fleet, but first of all themselves. So, the corruption of morals, the loss of the aristocratic spirit and Land Power was the result of that. Carl Schmitt explained it beautifully. That was and is the choice. My idea after Brexit is for England to return to being a Land Power. So, England could return to its continental identity. And that's the result of Brexit, not to go once more to the sea. There is no sea that is in the possession of England. That's an American problem now. But, you should return to England, return to this land…

N: What do you mean by 'continent'? Because for the English 'the continent' normally means Europe.

D: England as a continent. England as a continental power, *Festland* in German.

N: But how can an island be a Land Power? Japan surely has the same…

D: No, Japan was a Land Power before the Europeans arrived. So, that's easy. It's not a problem of geography, it's a problem of civilisational choice.

N: Well, that's interesting because it seems to me that in someways the Asians regretted their decision not to embrace the ideology of the Sea because they were conquered by the Europeans who did embrace it. And if you look at the Chinese now (and indeed the Japanese and Koreans), they are actually more supportive of globalisation (and the ideology of the Sea) than the UK and US are. So, maybe things are changing.

D: Maybe. However, in China I listened to a lecture from a professor who had some intriguing ideas. China, according to him, is composed of four parts. The North, represented by Manchuria and Altai, is a purely military part and provides a path to all the history of China. Culture defines the South. Production and agriculture define the West, while trade and culture define the East. And, according to him, China consists of all four parts taken together. For example, if you are too focused on the sea you should balance this with agriculture. If you are too involved with military affairs you should balance this with culture, philosophy and art. So, never go one way. This is the essence of Chinese identity. And that is why for them, multipolarity is the best solution. They could go towards the Sea while always being anchored by their agricultural continental space. They could develop their production but this should be balanced by their military capacities, etc. So, their four parts should always be balanced. And the idea of hegemony is completely outside of this way of thinking, but rather a reflection of asymmetry. For them, asymmetry is a kind of illness, an absence of balance.

N: But what makes you think that a multipolar world is going to consist of balanced and equal poles? Indeed, it is very likely they will be unbalanced or unequal, at least in some respects.

D: Yes. The balance could be arranged in different ways between many poles. And I think in a multipolar world — and this is something to consider — there could be completely new alliances for example, between Russia and England, between Russia and Europe, between Russia and USA, or between Russia and the Islamic world. For example, Russia with the Islamic world against Europe. So all alliances are open and possible, precisely because there will be a choice. So, you can choose and you can change.

N: That sounds like it might be rather chaotic, unstable and most likely dangerous.

D: As everything in life is.

N: But, why do we need this risk? Throughout history we have tried to mitigate such dangers by having one overwhelmingly strong power guaranteeing the general peace, for example, with the Pax Romana, Pax Brittanica, Pax Americana, etc.,…

D: Exactly.

N: So, these structures (while they functioned properly) managed to prevent catastrophes like great wars. But with the scenario you are suggesting, there would be no backstop against such a catastrophic outcome.

D: But we could make multipolar pacts, with each great power guaranteeing peace and stability in its zone, for example, Pax Russica, Pax Sinica, Pax Americana, Pax Europa, etc…

N: But who's going to guarantee peace between each great power? That's the problem.

D: Nobody. And that is multipolarity. And that is the Westphalian system.

N: But, the Westphalian system helped create the conditions for the First and Second World Wars to happen, because there was no ultimate guarantor of peace between the great powers.

D: I agree, war is still possible, there is no peace. But war is always possible, big or small, throughout all of history…

N: You are right, war is always possible. But during the Pax Romana, Pax Brittanica or Pax Americana (when they functioned properly) great wars were not possible because the preponderant power (i.e. the Romans, or the British or the US) would and could step in to stop them. So, within this framework little wars were possible, but not great wars. To that extent, surely this structure is better…

D: But nuclear weapons would prevent great wars. If you have nuclear multipolarity, then any confrontation between the great poles would lead immediately to the destruction of everybody. So, I think that is the way to limit world wars. Because there was not a real Pax Americana, but rather a bi–polar US-Soviet Pax. And bipolarity of nuclear weapons guaranteed the peace. So, if you give a nuclear weapon to the Islamic world, there would be no war between the Islamic world and Western countries or Russia. That is why I'm for nuclear weapon multipolarity. There should be an African nuclear bomb because otherwise Africa will be a territory of competition between the other poles. Each pole would have a nuclear arsenal and this would prevent great wars.

N: There are two key problems with this. Firstly, this would not stop a nuclear arms race and it might even encourage one, as man's desire for mastery would still exist and there would be plenty of opportunities to indulge in it in this structure. For example, any pole that relaxed its concentration on nuclear weapons might be put at a disadvantage by other poles who instead worked hard to create more powerful defences that could effectively protect them from nuclear weapons, or by those poles who developed nuclear weapons which could strike so fast and so powerfully that their enemy would not even realise that they had been attacked until it was too late. And as there would probably be no overarching power to enforce true nuclear equality in all senses, this would inevitably lead to the destruction or at least a severe debilitation of the effectiveness of nuclear polarity. Secondly, if every pole had nuclear weapons there would be more possibilities for terrorists to get hold of them. And so the risk of nuclear terrorism would increase. So, this global structure would present no guarantee against a great nuclear war or a terrible act of nuclear terrorism…

D: But, we are going to have a multipolar world. For example, I met with some people in England and said that we could now imagine various possibilities. First, there could be one liberal world hegemony. And everybody said, 'no, that's impossible, it's surrealistic. We declared that to be the case but it's not real'. Or there could be — and then I described the multipolar world with many negative aspects. And everybody said 'yes, that's possible, but it's bad'. So old good is possible but bad…

N: Maybe there is a third option?

D: I don't think so. Mankind has always…

N: But with mankind there are always options…

D: Yes, I think starting with a multipolar world.

N: But we are not there yet, we are still in a transition phase.

D: Yes, now we are moving from a unipolar world to a multipolar one. So, we need to reconsider everything. And multipolarity should be real multipolarity. We should question progress, technology, the subject, the law, the human. And accept not only the Western paradigm distributed evenly, because it won't be even or fair. And why is this particular passage to multipolarity so important? We need to go this way in order to try to grant more or less even conditions to everybody. We need to do something that is forgotten. We need to change the paradigm. So, no competition, no technology is destiny. We should accept different kinds of time. Anthropology would be the basic principle of multipolarity.

N: How would you enforce this? For example, if one pole just breaks the rules, the whole thing breaks down. Without an overarching enforcer, how does multipolarity work effectively?

D: The same way, after the Second World War, peace was enforced with the organisation of the United Nations. So, it could be done with talks where the accent shifts from a focus on economics to cultural and spiritual matters. It would be a return to the sacred and a complete change of paradigm from what we are dealing with currently. Because now we have multipolarity, but it is still unipolar multipolarity. We are dealing with weapons, economics, and technology. This is a Western kind of multipolarity. We need to create real multipolarity based on Latin American identity, on African identity, on Chinese philosophy, etc. and this will require us to find a new, universal language. Now we are using English language as the universal language. But, we will need to create a new kind of universal language.

N: Which language would that be?

D: No, not in that sense, not a kind of Esperanto. But language in a deep sense. A language that would be an instrument to reduce some Western paradigms and matrices. So, a Western matrix with a Chinese face, a Russian face, an Islamic face. We need to destroy this universality and base the dialog in a recognition of deep multiplicity, a deep decolonisation of society. That is the process, and it is a very difficult process. And I think that is the third choice. We need to consider a multipolarity that is distributive. The multipolarity of a Western matrix is only half way to the goal and that is very dangerous. So, unipolarity is already impossible. We have no other option in this sense. But we have the option of deciding how to organise this multipolarity. Multipolarity is most likely to come, but what kind of multipolarity it will be is an open question. This is why we need to concentrate and accept a new anthropology that does not rely on

Western universalism in any sense, either modern or pre-modern, and instead invite the Chinese, Muslims or others to participate in an elaboration of the principles of multipolarity. We need to revitalise this materialistic, egocentric, technological, economical way of thinking. We need a new mentality, a revolution of thought, which should not be Western-centric. It is not so much anti-Western, but rather the West should be reinstalled in a new context. The problem with the West is its titanic dimension, its pretention to overcome limits. This began precisely at the beginning of the Columbian Era when it ventured beyond the Pillars of Hercules. They were the metaphysical limit of Western civilisation.

N: But as we've already discussed, this desire to conquer beyond all limits came not so much from European civilisation but rather from Turanian civilisation…

D: I don't think overcoming geographical or material limits are a problem; it is the spiritual limit we shouldn't overcome. Hellenism wasn't only exclusive but also inclusive of culture. And it was not Hellenic, it was much more Iranian. It is interesting that there are normal limits for empires, for example, the Turkish Empire, Iranian Empire, Persian Empire, Chinese Empire, Russian Empire, European Empire. So, they couldn't overcome certain limits beyond being there, developing there, changing the power, the system. Only inside of some Turanian limits, Chinese limits, Turkish limits, Arab limits could there be changes. We cannot prevent the changes. But I think the multipolar world should be paternalistic. There should be a divine order, an Olympian order against Titanism. So, we need to prohibit not terrorism, but Titanism.

N: How do you prohibit this?

D: For example, before prohibiting Satanism, you need to establish the figure of Satan. Without this you cannot prohibit Satanism because it makes no sense. Now, Titanism has no sense. But thanks to Ernst Jünger, we have the figure of the Titan. I think the figure of the Titan is essential. In order to establish Anti-Titanism we need to understand what *hubris* is and what *Titanism* is. But this demands a new kind of philosophy. We need to introduce this idea at the centre, and recognise the aftermath of the Columbian period and modernity to be pure Titanism, and to prohibit this; to put it in context — in hell, or in Tartarus. Its domain is under the Earth, where it is free to rule. But this is only possible if God wins. So, this is precisely what is going on. In Christian terms this is the fight between angels and demons. We need to fight for a multipolar angelic Platonic world where multiplicity is possible and where unity is apophatic — this is a Platonic idea that unity doesn't exist; unity pre-exists. Any unity that exists is multiple; this is the paradigm of Plato's *Parmenides* dialogue, and the basis of Neo-Platonic philosophy. This was placed inside the Trinitarian concept of theology. It is a Neo-Platonic attitude which is based on Dionysius Areopagite's system, which is also the basis for some Western but mainly Eastern theology. We need to return to this concept in order to organise a Platonic vision of a multipolar world, instead of

Titanism, which exists now. Pure Titanism is globalisation, and the Western form of unipolarity. But the multipolarity we will most likely have will still be unipolarity and Titanism — I agree with that. Everyone will compete with nuclear weapons. So, we need to arrive at the destruction of all kinds of nuclear weapons. But we should not stop competing. Instead, we should recognise the Other as a positive category, not as the same as us. And this is a real act of multipolarity, this is an anthropological act. If the Chinese can understand Heiddeger and Carl Schmitt, we will have ideological allies — if they are sincere…

N: But this is the fundamental problem: do these other poles accept and agree with your interpretation of multipolarity? Maybe they won't, and if they don't, who will enforce your version of multipolarity?

D: Nobody, I think…

N: Well, then everything will collapse and it will lead to a terrible war…

D: Yes. I think that war is already happening — a cultural war. There is a fight between Logoi. The Logos of multipolarity is the Logos of Archangel Michael. And there is a Neo-Platonic attitude, as well as a Heiddegerian and Carl Schmittian concept that is fighting through the mentality of people now. And I notice that this fight is taking place in many corners of the earth. For example, there is an interest in exactly the same topics, subjects, and conclusions in Africa. I have many friends in South Africa. They understand the role of political theory, and they arrived at the same conclusions by themselves. They read my books because they come to the same conclusions in their own way, without knowledge or consideration of colonisation and so on. The same for Italy, for example. I was in Italy recently, and I was absolutely astonished. I began to unite anti-liberal leftist and rightists at the beginning of the 90s when I was considered to be just a crazy isolated Russian marginal. My far-right and far-left friends in Italy from the Red Brigades and Black Brigades were also considered to be completely outside the mainstream. But now, we have a government that consists of anti–liberal leftists and anti–liberal rightists. And they were my friends.

N: Did you meet them again when they were in the government?

D: Some of them. But it is an interesting reflection that they arrived at the same conclusions by themselves. I only follow the line. This is objective in some way because I'm following the same matter. For example, Lega Nord was founded intellectually by Gianfranco Miglio, who was a follower of Carl Schmitt. And he laid the principles of Carl Schmitt in Lega Nord. On the left there is a Schmittian by the name of Giorgio Agamben, and Massimo Cacciari, who is a follower of Henri Corben and a traditionalist, and the other is Costanzo Preve — a Marxist philosopher who has accepted Schmitt and Heidegger, including their geopolitics. So, we all arrived at exactly the same conclusions.

N: How do you know they arrived at exactly the same conclusions? I mean, just because everyone reads the same things doesn't mean that they come to the same conclusions. I suspect that each culture or civilisation is going to understand what they read differently. For example, the Chinese experience of Heidegger and Carl Schmitt is no doubt going to be coloured by Sun Tzu, Confucius and other Chinese philosophers…

D: No, they are not going to do this precisely because they could see that with the Heideggerian ideas and Schmittian philosophy they could fight for their Confucian way, so they are not Europeanised…

N: But as we discussed earlier, it's like Western Europeans reading Plato and Aristotle through a Latin lens; it's the same problem. They will be looking at Heidegger through a Confucian lens and that's going to change their understanding of his ideas.

D: What is multipolarity about? It is the art of translation. Translation, as I mentioned in my speech in Shanghai, is not a technical thing; it is an art. And the translator should also be a philosopher, because he should understand both concepts. So, it is not the translation of words, it is the translation of cultures — always. If you don't translate correctly, you could cause a war. For example, one president says one word to the other and then it is translated improperly or literally, or directly and you could cause a war. So, translation is the main problem. I think that we need something that could act as a kind of intermediary instrument, a tool of translation. For example, Heidegger… Heidegger is a part of Western culture, but his criticism and distance from Western culture provides us with a possibility to use him as an instrument. The Chinese could use Heidegger as an intermediary instrument to understand Plato or Aristotle. And the West could use Heidegger to understand Confucianism. But traditionalism is also a very good instrument, for example Ibn Arabi. Ibn Arabi is the best instrument to use when translating between Islamic and non–Islamic cultures. Without Ibn Arabi there is an impass in Salafism. But if we introduced Wahdat al-Wujud's 'Unity of Being' theory as something obligatory to the Islamic world, promoting Sufi orders or sharing them, we don't oblige them to stop being Islamic or reconsider them all as Shia. But first we install there this translated part, and after that we could introduce Heidegger or not. It's enough for us to deal with them, to have Ibn Arabi there. It is just like Suhrawardi for the Iranians. But Suhrawardi is Iranian and Ibn Arabi is pan-Islamic. With Ibn Arabi we could explain to any Muslim about China, Russia, the West, Christ — everything. I think, for example, that Schmitt, Heidegger and Guénon have the same role to play in the West. We shouldn't oblige the Chinese to understand it, but if we need to explain it, we know Ibn Arabi and Heidegger and they know Ibn Arabi and Confucius and so we can come to some conclusion that would revitalise the role of the exclusive will to power. For example, I think that we need to deconstruct the will to power and the modern Cartesian subject. We could deconstruct this together with all the Islamic world participating through Ibn Arabi, and all Western world participating through Heidegger,

and reading Nietzsche through Schmitt, and Lévi-Strauss through Franz Boas — not only from the right but as well from the left — through some post–modernists, we need to accept that. And in deconstructing this exclusive subject, which is based on the will to power, we could arrive at a better multipolar world.

N: These works might be suitable keys for translating other cultures according to the Russian mind, but maybe other countries will want different keys. How do you deal with this problem?

D: We need to concentrate precisely on this, on discovering these different 'Logoi'. We should invest all our money and effort, and every moment of our life, precisely in this. This is the one thing that is important and not selling or buying as everything perishes. Every moment of our life should be invested into this dialog, this translation problem, this identity problem, this historical understanding of colonisation. Otherwise, there will be a war, a deadly war that will not be caused by multipolarity, but the absence of importance given to these really important issues. For example, the alienation of *das Man*, and a kind of inertia or continuation of doing something whose reason for doing so we have no understanding of — there is a total absence of sense and meaning of things. And this is the real war. Finally, it is always a cognitive weapon that is most dangerous, not nuclear. Because a human being is behind a missile. And we should fight for a human being — for the mind, for the heart, for the culture. Because a human being is not technical, it is not a robot, it is human. And a human is rational. It is not a robot's place to make a decision to attack the other with nuclear weapons — it is for a rational man of a rational culture, Western, Chinese or Muslim. I think we have lost the human now. These are technical reasons; for example, who has more power — this is a robotic/artificial intelligence way of thinking.

N: Do you think your theory is going to beat the robots? Who's going to win? At the moment some would argue we are on the path to robots winning.

D: Exactly, robots are the humans of the West…

N: Not only the West, but most places…

D: We have everywhere the same current, the same situation. I think the robot represents the ideal of modern Western anthropology. And this is not a technological solution, it's a metaphysical solution that has technological consequences. Heidegger said that technology is metaphysical. So the robot is the Logos. But it is an alienated Logos, a Titanic Logos. And that is precisely the new God. The new God of artificial intelligence is robots. They are the great replacement of the human as the last world in this Titanic direction of civilisation. Robots are the logical conclusion of the Columbian period. So, artificial intelligence is the logical ending and terminus for the replacement of humans by robots. And this is precisely unipolar and technological. The problem already today is humans against robots.

N: Do you know the Chinese game called *Go*? They say it is the most complicated game in the world. And now for the first time they have computers that can actually beat humans at it. So, we are reaching a point now where humans, with the help of technology, can learn techniques that we never imagined could be possible before. Perhaps this could be the third way to the future; we could use computers and technology to teach us a different way of living and imagining civilisation.

D: That is very interesting. Today, we are seriously confronted by the problem of the difference between machine and man. And we are discovering here a very interesting aspect, that intelligence is artificial from the inside. It's not natural, because what is natural is stupidity. Intelligence is not natural; it's constructed, it's cultural. And so the difference between machine and man is not so huge as one might imagine, because now finally we can put this artificial intelligence that we have into other matter to be a secondary support. And we could easily imagine a situation where we are extrapolating our intelligence into another entity. It's possible. And this will be a thinking machine. And there were temptations to create it in the Middle Ages in the West by Ramon Llull or Thomas Aquinas. It is interesting that every aspect that we think is human could be simulated by a machine. Everything, that is, except one thing. What is called *Dasein*. The machine lacks only this one thing.

N: What about the soul?

D: No, the soul is artificial. The soul is a concept created and based on *Dasein*.

N: But the soul was given to us first by God and surely came before *Dasein*?

D: But according to Heidegger, this was one of the possible formulations of what *Dasein* is. The soul is too conservative, I would say. *Dasein* is a new concept that is more interesting than the soul. It is the root of the soul — *Dasein*. *Dasein* is the relation of the thinking presence to death. The machine has no death. It is as eternal as intelligence.

N: But a machine could die, in the sense that it stops working…

D: To stop working is not to be dead. Death is the relation of the thinking presence to death. So, the relation is key. A machine has no relation to death. Death is not a matter of ceasing to function. Death is relation of the thinking presence not to the end but to the limit, and intelligence is unlimited. It's always working. It's a neural network. It is a kind of infinite life, the intellectual life. And that is the only eternity and immortality that machines can give us. They will take our death and they will give us their immortality. And we are losing only the negative definition of ourselves, namely death. We are becoming machines and we are becoming immortal. And by becoming immortal we lose death. Death already has no value for us anymore, we have discredited it. Death is a negative value for us — it's wrecked. But if we recognise that death is the beginning of the eternal life of the soul, for example…

N: Surely the difference is that of mankind's relationship to eternity, the Christian idea of the soul, which after life goes to heaven or hell or indeed Purgatory and thus either returns (immediately or eventually) to God or leaves him forever, but in any sense it achieves eternity. Robots of course don't have this ontological dimension or experience. But in terms of the intelligence link, surely this can't be eternal either because robots have been built by finite and limited beings, that is, humans, and made from finite parts, so logically they are finite.

D: You mean material eternity; no, it is not because of this. The problem with robots is that they put into existence a process of thinking. And the end of some details is not the end of their destiny. Thought could be put into other things because robots are already a kind of receptacle of thought taken from outside. So they could transmit it and they would secure immortality by concentrating life and presence in that process of thinking. The most important thing is that a robot is not a new artificial body; it is an eternal continuation of the thinking process of the same body.

N: Parmenides would completely disagree with you that humans could create anything that could be eternal. It's simply beyond our capabilities. Only 'the One' is eternal, he would say. If robots are eternal, that means that eternity is contained within a certain space and time, etc., which is obviously problematic. For example, this 'receptacle of thought', as you call it, only exists so long as someone is capable of using and understanding it, so its eternity depends on a third party.

D: In the space of thought there is no time or space; there is an everlasting process of logic, as stated by the positivist thought of Bertrand Russell. As a philosopher, Russell is mediocre, but as a logician he is very clever and interesting, because he affirmed that everything is logic. So we can create the logical equivalent of anything. And we ourselves could be replaced by this logic equivalent of anything. Bodily existence doesn't add much. In that sense there are no limits precisely because there is no transcendence, and death is transcendent. Death creates a kind of limit. And the idea of robots and artificial intelligence is mortal in the Titanic way. So it is a Titan. I think that robots and artificial intelligence are a kind of black divinity, an informal hellish god, trying to come to the surface like a volcano, like Hephaestus. It is a subterranean divinity, which exists here against us, tries to replace us, and treats humanity as a kind of virus. It's the Antichrist. Technology is as well a kind of face of the Antichrist. And I think that it is precisely the fight between the human as *Dasein* with death and this robotic artificial intelligence as an emerging eternal god.

N: So, you don't see this as the next step of evolution?

D: For me evolution is involution. For example, if we use the Latin terms 'progress' and 'regress', and then we try to find the greek equivalents — progress is πρόοδος, and regress is ἐπιστροφή. From the Neo-Platonic perspective, progress (πρόοδος) is the change from unity to multiplicity, while regress (ἐπιστροφή) is the return to unity. It is

interesting that now we use these terms in a completely different way. So, for us progress is good, while regress is bad. For the Platonists it is quite the opposite; progress is bad, and regress is good. But involution, for example, is a new form of life. Robots represent a new form of life, if we consider a human as the next step up from a monkey. In this way yes, robots are more human than humans themselves, just as humans are more human than monkeys. They (robots) are a kind of Titanic monkey. A monkey is a symbol of the devil, the devil is a monkey of God. So, the monkey is the devil that turned into a human and now manifests its nature in the robot. There is this involution or fight, a Titanic fight against the Christian and Platonic understanding of the descended soul. The soul is a descended being created by God. So if there is descendant manifestation from God in the soul of man, the next step is death or the return. And the relationship towards death is already the return, is already a relation to the essence of our providence. So, our coming, our source, our foundation, this is our basis. These are very positive things. When we in modernity consider death as something negative, a pure privation and absence, we are already half–robots. With a negative concept of death, we are robots because we put all reality into the concept of life and this is only a part, a small part of ourselves, of our existence. And robots will be the end of this process. So, I think that robots are already here and artificial intelligence is already here; this is our modernity, which becomes more and more artificial, more and more manifest and less hidden. And this is quite transparent. I think that we are living in a hell that has ascended from its subterranean position to the surface of the earth. And now there is just the final battle because there are still humans. The problem is not with Chinese humans, Russian humans, African humans, etc. The problem is that a human is already not human. This is why Heidegger is so important for the last battle of *Dasein*. And this is why I think that the difference between those who are against us and those who don't care is much more important than the difference between Russians and Americans. For example, I have more friendship with some Chinese, Americans, Africans, Germans, or French than with Russians. For me, being Russian is not so important as being against this standard. But Russia is conservative, and considered to be such.

N: But if you look at this matter through the lens of Parmenides' conception of eternity, isn't the cycle for robots more or less the same as ours (that is, they are created, they live and then they stop functioning and return to their essential elements). It's just the creator that has changed (from God to man), but we are all still part of the eternal and divine 'One'.

D: Yes, but that is the so-called false infinity, infinity without transcendence. And there is a place for such infinity, it is the infinity of matter, the infinity of gods. If you take hell, for example, hell is eternal. Eternal in a way that it is immanent; there is no return but something indifferent. According to the Neo-Platonists, there are special

divinities that are gods of matter, they live eternally in matter. And humans are higher than they are because humans can return to heaven, to the motherland. While the divinities can't return; they are here for eternity. And they are not bad, they are gods of places, elements and so on. They should be respected and we should avoid them as much as possible because nevertheless they are the gods who try to keep the lowest material elements in place. These material divinities are not gods, they are goddesses. They are close to the demons of Christian hell. It is interesting that they observe the soul escaping, while they always remain there. They are some kind of guardians of immanent eternity. And they fight against our death because death…

N: Is an escape, is relief…

D: Yes, death is an escape. And if we exchange death for eternity, we will not escape. This is described in Gnostic eschatology. Valentinus said that after the escape of the last souls from this hellish universe, there would be a new Golden Age when no one will have to escape, because no one will have transcendence and so no one will suffer. But suffering is human. If we suffer, we are human. So if we suffer, we try to escape. And that is the only way to escape from this immortal Golden Age of the machines. It is precisely what is going on in the world, as I see it. It is also described in Christian Apocalypticism as a kingdom that seems to be eternal.

N: Has it already been realised or not yet?

D: I think it is being realised. I think it is an open choice. Everything is destiny and everything is freedom. For example, if it should come about then we would fight against it in the belief that we would overcome it. Our dignity tells us to fight. Maybe this fight is our decision, or maybe not. But victory is not as important as the fight itself. Victory is secondary, the fight is important. If we don't accept this, we are lost. If we are trying to fight, we are not lost and victory is already here. We should reconsider the meaning of victory. Victory is a state, not a result. When an object becomes objectified, then it's already lost. The fight is possible while we are still human. The human is *Dasein*. So death is structurally the centre of our being. And this is precisely what is central and what is the essence of the apocalypse. It is not a catastrophe, if we consider this as an objective. The catastrophe is not the apocalypse. The catastrophe is inside our decision, and not in the stones falling on our head, because everything is inside the human heart. The apocalypse is inside our head. We are living in an apocalyptic time and our fight is eschatological. Our existence is a fight; we cannot seek peace. Christ said I give you my peace, not as the world gives you, but I give you. So the peace of Christ is the peace of existence. We are trying to get the peace of Christ. We could establish this peace (of Christ) on earth, but maybe we will establish war instead of peace. But Christ's peace (transcendent peace) is more important than the earth's peace. So let's hope it will be peace on earth, but it is of secondary importance. That is why the positive evaluation of

death is so important and this was forgotten precisely at the beginning of modernity. Everything historically is limited.

Our journey continued on in silence while we both reflected on these ideas. We were getting closer to the destination where the shoot would take place, and the role of the Western media was obviously on Alex's mind — it seemed to me that he needed to vent…

D: But, for example, this Lauren Southern gave an impression of a very normal and balanced person. Maybe she has these ideas, everybody has a right to have any kind of ideas and express them. But she's treated in the mass media as a kind of devil. And she's not. I think there is a kind of absolutely paranoid, racist, Nazi attitude of the ultra-liberals against anybody who disagrees with them. So everybody is labelled as a Nazi, regardless of whether they are a Nazi or not, and that destroys the concept of Nazi. If everybody who doesn't agree with CNN is a Nazi then the concept of a Nazi doesn't exist or everybody is a Nazi. So it renders the term meaningless. And I think it's this overuse of certain names and labels that destroys the possibility of logical discussion.

N: But Lauren Southern and particularly Alex Jones are making their career and name by being the other voice. And it's curious that InfoWars currently has apps on Apple and other globalist companies/platforms, whilst at the same time stating that it is a completely independent voice.

D: I know, I'm following them on Facebook with great criticism…

N: There is a sort of irony in this. They are building their careers on being an alternative voice to the globalist system, but as they advance in this career they then integrate within that system.

D: I spoke a few days ago with an interesting Georgian journalist who was working for Columbia University and the United Nations. She is a singer as well and composed the song that was a runner-up in the Eurovision song contest in 2009; she didn't sing this song, but she co-wrote it. Her name is Tinatin Japaridze and she is a citizen of Russia, Georgian by origin and living in the US as an American citizen. So she unites three identities: ethically Georgian, culturally and politically Russian, and now she is an American. And she used to live in England as well. And when we spoke together, one of the questions she asked me was why do Americans treat Russians in a negative way. And in trying to make a kind of philosophical response, I used an example that would connect with her and her personal experience. I said that I believe the problem is the construction of the subject. The Americans consider themselves to be the subject, while the Other is not a subject; they are all the same, and are all worse, subhuman. But in dealing with Russia, if Russia doesn't want to follow American rules and correspond to the criteria, considered by Americans as normative, it is considered to be negative. So

they treat us on the same level or worse. For them the only acceptable type of otherness is really sameness, and no other otherness is accepted.

N: Yes, I heard the Russians use this response quite a few times when I was working in diplomacy. But then the Americans or British would just say, 'Hang on, you signed up for these rules as well, they are not just our rules. You are a member of the P5 in the UN, the OSCE, the Council of Europe, etc. so these are also your rules, which you helped to establish as well.' That's the standard Western response.

D: Yes, absolutely. But nevertheless, we knew that if we didn't sign these agreements, then things would be worse. This is an agreement in a formal way. But the main issue is the concept of understanding what is the subject and what is the Other. And the same situation is being repeated for the Georgians. Because the Russians treat the Georgians, in the best way, as a part of ourselves; we want them to be part of the Soviet Union, part of our empire or share our wars. Then we accuse and punish them. And the Americans are treating us in the same way as the Russians are treating the Georgians. The Georgians are the victims, or not exactly, as there are also the South Ossetians. The Georgians are treating the South Ossetians in exactly the same way; either you are Georgian or we will kill you. Then the South Ossetians in order not to be killed appeal to the other, to Russia. And then in turn the Georgians, in order not to be killed by the Russians, appeal to the Americans. And so, who is the good guy and who is the bad guy here? My answer is that the concept of the subject and understanding of otherness is the bad guy. So we are all wrong. The Americans are wrong, the Russians are wrong, the Georgians are wrong, the South Ossetians are wrong as well because they are treating their minorities in the same way. The only way to destroy this kind of subject is to impose another understanding of otherness that is not the same and not worse. So, the Other should be accepted as the other in a positive way without being the same or worse. If we don't sign up to the human rights conventions, we are not worse, we are not the same, we are just the Other. For example, we have a different understanding of what is human and what is right and that was precisely the case when I participated with Patriarch Kirill in the creation of a Russian Orthodox Church declaration of human rights. For example, we excluded the rights for sin from the declaration because sin is…

N: What do you mean by that?

D: For example, to do something which is anti-Christian, like sodomy. So our concept of human rights excludes the right of the sinner. The sinner is…we should tolerate him…

N: Because we are all sinners.

D: Yes, absolutely, but it shouldn't be part of the concept of rights. There is a moral law. You can transcend or overcome it, but it is your fault. In my eyes, sin is sin. And to consider something to be a sin is the main right, our right, the Christian right. We are

free by the law of God to sin. And this is our interpretation of human rights. But it is in full contradiction with the understanding of human rights in the liberal West. Because they think that there is no sin, and that, for example, sexual perversion is not a sin, this is essential for human rights in the liberal West. But this is quite impossible to accept for the Orthodox Church. So if you are a Western liberal you think that the Orthodox Christian understanding of human rights is wrong. We cannot recognise the same human rights, the liberal Western understanding of human rights. And the real application of this concept is normally the limits of modern Western European civilisation or whoever agrees. But if you don't agree, if, for example, you are Muslim, or an Orthodox Christian or Chinese or Indian and you simply don't agree with that in your science or your tradition, you should be recognised as not worse, not the same, but as other. For example, where sin is considered to be sin the Christian way is not to punish others, you should punish yourself. But regardless, you should consider sin as sin, and not otherwise.

N: But the Orthodox Church (and indeed the Catholic Church) has moved closer to the world and in doing so its concept of sin has developed. For example, for many centuries divorce was considered to be intolerable and was not allowed, now the Orthodox Church's attitude towards it (influenced by the world) has somewhat softened.

D: But it is our problem and you could restore the situation. For example, divorce is still considered to be a sin.

N: I have heard that it is far easier to divorce in the Orthodox Church than in the Catholic Church. In Catholicism divorce is still absolutely forbidden. Under certain special circumstances an annulment may be granted, but it's not a divorce. So, Catholics don't formally allow divorce, while the Orthodox Church in certain circumstances seems to allow it.

D: No, it's not allowed because we have a church marriage that can't be broken, except only in very special cases. Divorce is not possible in the Orthodox Church. It is tolerated as a sin, but it is considered to be a sin. You could sin, as everybody sins. But it is not legitimised. The positive aspect is that it could develop, it could change; for example, if we say it should change, then it can change. We think about liberal secularism in that way. But maybe in our change we reinforce things and make the rules more and more difficult. Maybe we will return to the roots and that won't be considered much of a change. So there is already some axiological dimension in considering what the change is. Changes considered to be for the good are liberal, secular and so on. If there is a change in the opposite direction — for example, a return to a strict prohibition of abortion on the legal level, and a prohibition of divorce — all this will cause problems for the Western mentality.

N: But also for the current Russian mentality; these things are widespread in Russia as well…

D: Because Russia is under the influence of the West. This is not true Russian mentality. Western mentality is projected, injected into Russian society now by liberalism but before by the very extreme measures of the Bolsheviks, and so on — there is always one kind of dominating ideology. When we are speaking about that, we are dealing with what we consider to be a must, and that is the progress of secularisation. And finally there is this technological development, this individualisation of more and more categories of rights that we are deprived of, and this is the only method of change — the only way. So we are not free to choose. We are free to become more and more as the West. And that is the problem; this exclusion of otherness. But if we apply the same level of otherness with Russia, we understand Russian nationalism; why Crimea is ours, why South Ossetia is South Ossetian, and so on. And so we have a justification for the same hypocrisy, the same false double standards exactly as the West. It's just a reflection. What the West hates in Russia is itself. We are a mirror image of them. It's the repetition of the same false pretenses. Georgians are absolutely against Russian projection, but when they are dealing with the South Ossetians, it's a repetition of the American and Russian way, their nationalism: 'You, South Ossetians, are nobody. You should be Georgians. You have no rights. We are Georgians and you should be exactly like us and speak the same language, learn our ideology, back our decision to be closer to NATO, for example. And you cannot have any other option, whether it be geopolitical, ideological, or religious. You are the same or you will be punished'. If we apply this argument on three levels (American, Russian, Georgian) for this Georgian woman, the problem was quite clear to her because she has these three identities. And she agreed absolutely that there is something wrong with the paradigm, and that there is not something wrong with the Russians, Georgians or Americans because, for example, if the Americans are wrong, why do the Russians then treat the Georgians in such a bad way. There is something wrong with the paradigm. She couldn't be in favour of the Americans being against the Russians, and then in favour of the Russians being against Georgians, for her it would be impossible, because she unites all these identities without any problems. She's trying to understand why there is such a misunderstanding. And the problem is she couldn't blame the Americans, Russians or Georgians. But she should blame someone, because there is a problem. Who's responsible? The concept of Otherness and the concept of Subject are responsible. And that is why I said that only a lie is universal, because with all their intentions they all are committing a wrong action. And the essence of these wrong intentions is the same. The lie is the same. But the identities (American identity, Georgian identity or Russian identity) are different. So, different identities, different truths, but the same lie. When we behave towards the Other in that way, we are always in the same lie. And we are lying not only about the Other, in judging them as ourselves or worse, but we are also lying about ourselves because we miss our identity in the

other sense. Everything is a result of the illness of the *subject*. The subject is sick, this kind of subject, and not the Russians, or Americans — but the subject. And we need to cure it. We need to cure it in some way, trying not to make peace between the paths, but at least to identify the problem. I'm absolutely sure that the West needs a cure and treatment, because it's contagious; we have the same virus. But it's a Western virus. For example, the Mongolian Empire solved the problem of identity by including Islam. Although being formal rulers of the empire, they absolutely tolerated Christian Orthodoxy and gave all authority to the Russians. So, this is an example of a cure. Maybe it is a not Western example. But it is an example nevertheless, that you could manage differences in another way, by not pretending that your absolute is Absolute. This was precisely Genghis Khan's heritage, to consider every religion as valuable.

N: Your solution, *tolerance of the Other*, has been active in Europe now for many centuries, most notably since the Peace of Westphalia in 1648, when Catholics and Protestants were famously told to tolerate each other. However, this philosophy of tolerance, besides weakening the bonds of unity in Christian Europe, ultimately led to hyper-individuality and the tolerance of everything the individual desires, which in turn led to the fragmentation of society down to the level of the individual, and then the attendant projection of this ideology on the global level. So, there is an interesting contradiction in what you say, as tolerance created many of the problems we have been discussing — it is not a perfect solution and comes with a heavy price. But, strangely enough, you seem to be saying that the cure to global liberal tolerance is more tolerance.

D: Tolerance as well as peace. Pax Americana is tolerant to what is inside of it. It's intolerant to what's outside. Because the most important problem is the understanding of unity. The only way to correctly understand the essence of unity is with the *apophatic unity* of Plato (from the Greek αποφατικός negative: it means that the highest Reality in its final depth is incomprehensible and indefinable by means of human language and concepts), that is, unity is not. It should be, but it is not. Everything that is easy is not unity. So, that is the second principle of Plato's *Parmenides* dialogue.

N: Isn't this contradicted by the Bible when Christ tells his disciples to go now and spread the word (the one truth of Christ) to all the nations of the world (that is, so the world can be united by this one, positive Truth)?

D: The truth is Christ, and Christ is the second face of the Trinity. And the Trinity is inclusive, not exclusive. It's the three faces of God at the same time. So that is unity and multiplicity at the same time. That is a synthesis.

N: Looking at this from the traditional Christian perspective, doesn't multipolarity just legitimise Buddhism, Islam, Hinduism, atheism, etc. and put them on the same level as Christianity? Surely, it is just pure and simple relativism with all its attendant contradictions. If everything is true, then nothing is true. In Christianity there is really only one Truth (Christ), and as 2 Corinthians 6:15 says, 'And what concord hath Christ

with Belial? Or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel?' But in your multipolarity everything is possible.

D: If we follow the Bible in the formal way, we would compete with one another exactly as we did. And after that, we split into Catholicism, Orthodoxy and Protestantism, and finally hyper-individualism. And that is precisely why, for example, Alain de Benoist, being a pagan, considered that Judaism, the Bible and Christianity were responsible for modernity. For him everything is quite logical because if you begin to go the way of *monotheism* you will end with globalisation, liberalism and hyper-individualism. I don't think so. I think we can accept a pluralistic understanding of the Bible. An affirmed unity of God, and unity of Christ, and proclaim the Gospel within its limit but still not formally, formally it was possible but informally recognising the others. There is an absence of Titanism in this, because it is unity when you should go to all the people of the world. But please take them into consideration. You could say your truth, but not force them to accept it. There is no violence in this. Please, go and say it to the world, maybe you will be killed or eaten, it's your service to God. But if you force them, if you are imposing your own truth on them and if you consider them to be sub–human, you are not Christian anymore, I think. We cannot find a formal word for that, for this false universality. For example, my spiritual father, Father Vladimir, thinks that everything is created by Christ including the other religions, as well as their meaning, goal and truth. And inside of this they have their own Christ. But this universality is not formal. And only a saint could understand the real meaning of the different religions. And when sinners behave themselves as people who know the real absolute truth, they put the real transcendent truth and unity on their level and they make a distortion of this truth. That is not a formal dogma of Christianity, but that is the rule. Orthodoxy is much more inclusive, but not in a formal way. In a formal way it is just as exclusive as Catholicism.

N: Yes, one can't and shouldn't force people to accept a faith if they don't want to. Even though, ironically enough, most of Europe and indeed Russia (via Prince Vladimir) owe their Christianity to the fact that their leader became Christian and so the people were obliged to accept his faith as well. Also, one must be careful about formal and informal interpretations of the Scriptures; as you say, it takes a saint to interpret these things correctly. So, perhaps, for us sinners, it is best to just accept the divine words as simply as a child would. Or from the Catholic perspective to trust in the divine leadership of the pope. But this perhaps raises some difficulties for the Orthodox Church, because you don't recognise the pope as the leader. Please, just remind me, on what is the legitimacy of Russian Orthodoxy based?

D: The same…

N: No, Catholicism traces its roots directly from St Peter…

D: St Peter was not the only apostle, there were others.

N: But only he was told by Christ, 'You are Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church'.

D: But that was the case. We considered Peter being the Church of St Peter and St Paul and the other apostles.

N: But Peter was to lead…

D: We are following St Peter and for us Rome was the initial capital of the Roman Empire (before the centre moved to Constantinople) and one of the important centres of Christianity along with Alexandria where the other leader was, the successor of St Mark. So, we consider all these apostles, with Peter as one of them. The first apostles are the creators of the Church and we follow them and all the transmissions from them over the ages. So, we consider the main popes before the Great Schism of 1054 as complete archbishops of the Church. But the Orthodox Church doesn't accept the first and unique position of the successors of St Peter.

N: On what grounds?

D: The idea that there were other cathedra of apostolic tradition in Alexandria, Antioch, and Constantinople. These are as well a continuation of the branches of the same line. So, there is multiplicity with the same route.

N: But how do you get round Christ's specific promise to build his Church upon Peter?

D: We have a different interpretation of the meaning that he is the only one. The other apostles were in accordance with him, the others received the apostolic transmission from Him into the apostolic churches, the tradition of the Catholic and Orthodox Churches have the same lineage. We agree with that. But it doesn't mean that only his successors have the exclusive right to interpret the dogmas and norms of the Church. The Catholics believe in that, they interpret the first position of Peter in this way, but the Orthodox interpret it in another way in accordance with the Orthodox tradition. But I don't think we could insist that there is absolute truth and that the other is less true. I spoke to a Dominican monk in Sicily, and he considered that the only truth, the absolute truth, is the Catholic one. He was radically against my idea of the *relativity of absolutes*, the *multiplicity of absolutes*. It is interesting that, if he were a traditionalist Catholic, I would extend my agreement with him. But he said a few interesting things: our pope says that humanity is in progress, and that material progress, tolerance and migration are good things, and that we need to adjust ourselves to the challenges of modern science. So our absolute truth is accepting of modern progress, including evolution.

N: Yes, but that has more to do with the current representative (Pope Francis) than the structure of Catholic apostolic succession itself. So, you can have good and bad popes, but the structure itself and the legitimacy on which it is based is what counts, no?

D: Yes, but what is interesting is that this Dominican monk began as a traditionalist and I could understand him and his defence, even though that is not my absolute. But after that, his argument was something that I couldn't accept at any price because he was arguing in favour of the truth of the anti-Christian, secular, modernist, scientific, materialist, progressive, evolutionist's world vision and basing it precisely on this absolutism. So I think this is a reality problem, when you begin to defend quite the opposite of what you believe in, but still using the same principles.

N: That is rather curious because Pope Pius IX in 1864 in his *Syllabus of Errors* famously condemned the same things you condemned, but this, in part, led to the loss of the Papal States and the pope becoming a prisoner of the Vatican. After he realised this, he adapted his geopolitical strategy to just survive, and Catholicism changed, for example, with the doctrine of Papal Infallibility. So, perhaps today this is just another case of the Papacy in the face of strong criticism from the liberal West adapting and becoming cleverer with PR in order to survive. And, some would argue that its core beliefs have not changed.

D: No, I don't judge the popes. For the Orthodox Church, after the Great Schism, we don't have any consideration at all for them; the pope could say anything — for us it's of zero importance. We consider St Peter as the founder of the Church, but not the popes. So his successors could be good or bad. But for us Apostolic Succession is a direct chain from the apostles. That is essential. There is a transmission of special power that is embedded into the function of the priest that doesn't depend on St Peter, it depends on the archbishops and the Church. And in the Orthodox Christian Church there is a consensus about this transmission. Our Church is considered to be completely legitimate from this point of view. Apostolic Succession in our understanding goes through the Church. The Church is represented by the consensus of the council of bishops. The bishops are the most important and the pope or other archbishops or metropolitans at the end of the day are only bishops. So, the problem is the bishop, and who is the most important among the bishops? This is dependent on historical or cultural conditions. The problem is that the Church is two bishops plus one. When they transmit the grace they've received in a proper way there is the Church. The Church is based on bishops. Peter was the first bishop. So everything is based on him. And that is Apostolic Succession. When he transmitted this function, then the next bishop became a kind of Peter. So, a bishop is a Peter. It is a functionary name. The foundation stone of the Church, according to our path, is that Peter is a function, to be a bishop. A bishop is not an ordinary priest. A bishop is a special priest that can be together with other bishops. Two bishops are required in order to have a succession.[11] And any bishop becomes a kind of Peter, not individually but functionally. That is a basic part of the Church. It is interpreted as 'When there are two saying my name, I'm among them'[12] . This concerns bishops, i.e. special men that have received Apostolic Succession in our sense. But it is

interesting that after the Great Schism this unique understanding of the church split as well. And everybody thinks that their church has the fullness of truth and that the other church only represents a part and has lost the whole thing. So, formally it's the same subject, but something is wrong inside. In order to understand that, we shouldn't impose one on the other as we pretend to do. For example, we Orthodox pretend that we have the plenitude of the truth, the same with Catholics, and we say, 'Please come back to us and we will be normal'. But it is the same situation with the Americans who say, 'Please come back to our transparency, human rights, LGBT, and there won't be a problem with you. Please, let us change your identity into ours and we will accept you. Accept Catholicism and we will accept you. Accept Orthodoxy and we will accept you. Georgians, accept Russia and we will accept you.' So, that is the problem of the subject. And I think that when we come to the Orthodox tradition in its formal way we can't find a solution here. The same with all the limited, partial versions of tradition. We must consider that something is wrong with this formal structure, and not with the essence. Maybe informally everything is all right but formally there is something illogical in that pretension that promotes intolerance more and more. And we need to cure that. It is not easy. We need to cure that by returning to the apophatic tradition. That is precisely what we have lost. We have lost the negative understanding of unity, that unity is not an ontological principles.

N: You have said this to me before. However, I suppose the root of this discussion about unity stems from our monotheistic backgrounds. And you can't get around the fact that monotheism is distinctly hierarchical in its essence. 'Monotheism' from the Greek means that there is only one single God, that is, it's not a council, it's not a democracy, it's not a discussion. There is only one God in heaven and we are to love and serve him.

D: Yes, but how do we understand this hierarchical essence? One God — yes, but the interpretation of God the Father is precisely the problem. If we apply Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite's or John Scotus Eriugena's understanding that unity is negative, that destroys the existence of only one truth in the same ontological way. So, God the Father is not a being, he's before being, something that is pre-being. It's a personality precisely. It's a relation to some kind of abyss, a pre-ontological abyss that makes it possible. But being is always second. There is something that precedes it.

N: So, in your understanding, it is still hierarchical?

D: Yes, absolutely. But the relation of the Father to the Son includes multiplicity.

N: But it's not equality?

D: No, not equality but multiplicity. Once we accept that transcendental apophatic dimension it transforms our understanding of unity: unity becomes duality. In some kind of unity there is a duality. And in order to cure this duality, to save it from contradiction, there is the third person of the Holy Spirit. That is a kind of dialectic relation of unity. This dialectic relation of unity that introduces multiplicity in unity transforms it from

exclusiveness, that is, exclusive unity to unity. Exclusive unity creates a different kind of subject that is not an exclusive subject, that is an inclusive subject, that includes the transcendental apophatic dimension in itself. And the unification of transcendence and immanence, I think, is precisely the kind of metaphysical revolution that can and should be returned to Christianity. So, a metaphysical Christianity that was forgotten over the ages and saved only by the mystics. That is the mystical tradition of the Orthodox Church, the Catholic Church and also Protestantism with for example Jakob Böhme and Hegel. They tried to save this complex structure of the subject, and make it not so much exclusive and pure monotonic monotheism. Monotheism is when you consider God as one being and so there is exclusive unity, which is inclusive and so on. And that is the problem; if we accept the complexity of the subject and unity, the dialectical nature of unity, we could solve the problem of subject and arrange the hierarchical relationship in a more balanced way. For example, the understanding of the Trinity in Orthodox Christianity is the same because the absence of 'Filioque' makes the Holy Spirit exactly equal. There is no subordination. There is the Father, the Son, the Holy Ghost and they are balanced. The Father is the first, but the Holy Ghost is not third. It is not second, but not third. There is no second or third here, there is the first. And there is a kind of equality between the faces of the Holy Trinity and this is precisely how the absence of 'Filioque' was interpreted in the Orthodox tradition. A special form of equality; there are no hierarchical relations inside the Holy Trinity. It's the most important theological point of Orthodox theology. That is why we believe that Catholicism is more prone to hierarchy, exclusiveness, and the oblivion of the transcendental aphophatic tradition that existed in the beginning, and why it is responsible in our eyes for all the rest. But this is only a suggestion. I think that, for example, when we come to the relations of the Orthodox Christian tradition with Buddhism or Hinduism, the exact same accusation that we are making against the Catholics could be made against us.

N: Well, I'm sure Catholics would take issue with many of those accusations. But, that is one of the problems with multipolarity: it just creates and fortifies different camps of opposing worldviews who criticise each other, which is hardly conducive to world harmony.

D: Absolutely. But if we are for multipolarity, we need to continue the Orthodox criticism of Catholicism, and in turn criticise Orthodoxy with the other traditions. It is the principle. Orthodoxy is not the final truth, it is only a Russian Orthodox truth. But symbolically it shows how it could be solved. In Christianity there are two points — multipolar Orthodoxy and less multipolar Catholicism — but that is not all. That is only the relationship between two concrete cultures: Western European Catholicism and Eastern European Orthodoxy. Their relationship is the reflection of a broader context but the same rules can be applied concerning Christianity as a whole from the point of Buddhist or Chinese civilisation. But again, that is multipolarity, 'not Russia' is

multipolarity. Multipolarity is the possibility to accept negative unity, apophatic unity and accept the other as possibly having relations to this unity by other ways than ourselves. Maybe or maybe not. But we can't affirm it formally; it would destroy our faith.

N: That's the point and the major contradiction in multipolarity. You are looking to create a world of confusion and shadows, where we have to tip toe between the formal and informal. Where, on the one hand, you formally believe that your civilisation's truth is correct, but on other hand you informally recognise that the Other's truth might be the answer as well. It is a schizophrenic and illogical contradiction, no? Plus, not everyone would be able to skilfully tread the delicate line between the formal and informal. And what happens to those who fail? As you mentioned, to admit this formally would destroy our faith. So you are playing with fire. Remember how God punished the Jews for flirting with pagan gods, and don't forget the sacrifice of the holy martyrs who died, rather than recognise other gods or deny their own faith.

D: But we need to accept and live with this complex contradiction. It is a relative absolute, because in a logical way you are right: it is impossible to accept it based on the logic that is from the Logos of Apollo. However, there is a second Logos, the Logos of Dionysius, which is based on contradiction. This is what is not only a dream but is a science, a different science, an illogical science, not an Apollonian science, but a Dionysian science, the science of rhetoric, which is a kind of transformation of the logical Logos. Rhetoric uses what is not logical at all; for example, a metaphor. When you use a metaphor you say that 'this is that' which is illogical — because, if *this* is *that*, then *this* is not *this*. Rather, a metaphor is a rhetorical device, when I want to say one thing and I say another thing. Our speeches are based more on rhetoric than Aristotelian physics are based on rhetoric.

N: Yes, I remember you said this in winter, that the problem of most modern interpretations of Aristotle are that they are based on (Apollonian) logical analysis. Whereas you believe that Aristotle should be rhetorically analysed. Is this what you are referring to?

D: Absolutely.

N: What exactly did you mean by this statement?

D: So, our definitions of a thing or a point of space and time are based on the identification between mathematics and physics. The mathematical is considered to be the same as the logical and the physical. But this is quite opposite to Aristotle's attitude, because what is logic? Logic is A is not B. The first, the second, and third laws of logic are: law of identity (A=A); the law (prohibition) of contradiction (A is not equal to 'not A'); the law of the excluded middle (either A or not A is true, there is no third). That already destroys the definition of the thing in Aristotle's *Physics* as something that consists of two things: form and matter. According to Aristotle, form and matter can't

exist without each other. There is 'Eidos', which includes form and matter. So the one is two. And we can't say that there is only 'Eidos', only form, because when we say there is only form, it is something that couldn't exist. So there is only form and matter, and any matter is given to us in a form. And any form is given to us in a matter. These are the basics, but it is a contradiction of Aristotelian logic. The first, second and third laws of logic cannot be applied to it. I think Aristotle didn't think of that. It is modernity that created a kind of identification between mathematics and physics. So, we have missed Aristotelian orthodoxy in dealing with physics. Instead, we have started to deal with physics as if it's a logical theoretical point that doesn't exist, because the mathematical point doesn't exist. Negative numbers don't exist. So there are no such things as two dimensional or three dimensional spaces. There are logical objects, like geometry and mathematics. But physics is rhetorical. It's a so-called two dimensional space — a direct line. There are such metaphors and no objects. We are trying to deal with metaphors, as the logical affirmations are coming into contradiction — a contradiction in dealing with reality. And we use metaphors, and a metaphor is poetic. This is what Gaston Bachelard, a very interesting French author, has dedicated five books to in *Imagination in Modern Science*[13] . First of all, in dealing with elements — with fire, earth, water, etc. — we base them on our imagination. The elements are part of our imagination or rhetorical figures and they have all the legitimacy to be such in the construction of our concept. But if we try to identify them with logical objects we come into contradiction. So, my idea is that science can be precise only when it's linked with rhetoric, when it is poetic. And when it is dealing as much with poetry and art as with mathematics.

N: What does this mean in practice, though?

D: It means that we need to accept completely a different Dionysian dimension of knowledge. Every logical Apollonian dimension is quite good for studying the structure of the mind, and the structure of logical things. But in dealing with things and phenomena we should change the register. We need to deal not with logic but with rhetoric, phenomenology, and norms. In dealing with norms we should concentrate on intentionality. Reality is intentional. Intentionality is the process of thinking, when the object of thinking is inside of us, not outside. But it has to do with imagination much more than studying outside the object because in studying outside the object we are creating an outside object. Using Apollonian logic and constructive reality always ends with a questioning automat and mechanisms, instead of organic reality, which is a living and thinking being inside of us. There is imagination in this. Physics should be considered a poetic science. That is the field of our imagination. And this will cause no violence to the ambience; we will not insist with our paranoia on changing reality into the techno-sphere. We will accept nature as it is with our proper imagination. And we will be happy using imagination with nature. We will stop being violent because

Apollonian logic is violent. We should limit this violence to the spiritual world. In dealing with the phenomenological world we should be poetic, we should be artists. That was the Renaissance attitude. And everything ended with the arrival of the cursed Columbian period. The science of the Renaissance was…

N: …Leonardo da Vinci's sketches of the human body, for example?

D: Yes, that was phenomenological science in true accordance with Aristotle. So, Platonism means dealing with the spiritual, with imagination and hermetic as well.

N: So, in your view, the concrete, pragmatic aspects of physics and biology (e.g. the development of computers and medicine) should go? Instead, physics and biology should just be based entirely on rhetoric and poetry?

D: Yes, because the violence of Apollonian Logos has destroyed the dialectical Dionysian phenomenological reality and replaced it with robotic virtual reality. During modernity, robots and the virtual have begun to replace human beings. Modernity represents the final part of this process. So, we need to return to the poetic understanding of reality and create real science based on poetry. Poetry deals more with phenomenology in a more exact, a more correct way. It is more precise with science than logic is because logic installs its own object. For example, something that doesn't exist in reality like the point, the line, the space, the dimensions. And fractals and new physics are a kind of finalisation of that. There is a fractal concept when we understand finally that there is no such thing as a line in nature. There are only curves with smaller or greater curvature. So there is no line. There is no two-dimensional space. There is at least one point where two-dimensionality is replaced by exactitude with three-dimensionality. The same with three-dimensionality; Superstring theory shows us that we need six dimensions in order to arrive at the correct calculation in equations. Maybe it is as well a logical hallucination but the line is right. In order to make science really precise we need to put aside the Apollonian universe that we know so well and embrace the phenomenological one.

N: Will the practical applications of science, like the creation of cars or iPads, still exist in your universe?

D: It's not necessary or important — it can stay or remain, but the choice should be open. For example, now we are going to a place with no electricity, where electricity is optional. So we can have electricity or not, but it doesn't make us less human. The humans living there are absolutely like us but better. So, we could decide to have it or not have it. The same with iPads; we could have them or not. It is not destiny. And technology is not destiny. History is not destiny — history is a choice. I think we are living in a world where having or not having an iPad cannot be a topic of discussion. If you have an iPad, you are normal; if you don't, you are crazy, sub-human, a migrant or an invalid. You are a poor guy that needs our help. There is something wrong with you if you don't have or at least don't dream of having one. This is precisely where we have a

Titanic obsession that dehumanises us. We need to treat the man with an iPad and the man without an iPad in exactly the same way. And we should always decide everything and not accept the decision of the other without a choice. We can have confidence in someone, but it is not necessary. This will be our school, an iPad school for example, or iPad religion. This is possible. I'm a Buddhist, for example, you are Orthodox and she is an iPad follower. We could create all kinds of cults. But we need to restore the freedom to do so. Technology is not destiny. Democracy is not destiny. Human rights in the Western understanding are not destiny. It's a possible choice, not a necessity. And it's very difficult to overcome that because if we try we are called racists, and are told that there is only one truth, our truth…

N: Some might say with this approach you will become like them, because you are imposing your universal truth, the truth of multipolarity, on the world and that becomes universalistic in itself.

D: I can't disagree; I think this is a new way to real universality, new universality. But this is inclusive universality.

N: But, if it is inclusive, presumably it will include people who don't accept multipolarity. However, for this to work surely everyone needs to buy into it, especially the current power brokers of the world or there will be constant wars.

D: But multipolarity can accept those who don't accept it because multipolarity is dynamic. It's not a strict dogma as in 'we have multipolarity and we are happy' or 'we don't have it and we are unhappy'. Not at all, multipolarity is a principle. It is inclusive. And because we are multipolar we accept those who don't accept multipolarity. We might fight against them but we accept their human dignity — if they won't turn into robots. Or we will accept their robotic dignity because there is not long to wait before this liberal globalist hegemony will turn everybody into robots. But that will be a different situation. So, multipolarity accepts not only those who agree with it — that is precisely what multipolarity is. If you accept only those who agree with you, you are absolutely a unipolar universalist. This is dialectic. However, acceptance is not necessarily peace — there is a difference. For example, you could accept someone who wants to kill you. You should accept it because he is free. So you need to bother with yourself. You should be prepared for peace or for war, to speak or to fight, to defend or to attack. This is not something absolutely unusual because before Columbus we lived more or less in the same world, a multipolar world. And there was almost no fighting between empires — there were periods of peace and there were period of wars, alliances or indifference. For example, the Chinese Empire didn't conflict with the Indian Empire, nor with the Islamic world, and the Iranian Empire.

N: So, this worldview is just turning down the volume of what modernity has created. It's not about creating something brand new?

D: Yes, yes, exactly that is it! It is just turning down the volume. A very, very good idea. It's not so much about creating something completely out of the blue. It is something that existed before, and which currently does not exist but could exist. It is something partly new and partly old, partly revolutionary and partly conservative, partly aggressive and partly pacifist, and that could be partly exclusive. It is trying to balance the imbalanced. Because a utopia is aggressive, Titanic, and imposes something…

N: Yes, it is a path of struggle to reach the perfect, but on earth you never reach it — that's the problem. And often attempting to do so comes at a terrible price.

D: Yes, but multipolarity is a process. It shouldn't replace an imbalanced system with a balanced one. It should try to stay imbalanced and will stay always in conflict. And it is not the end of the conflict. It is trying to moderate conflict, to keep it within limits, but not to stop it. It deals with realism, a new kind of realism, not a modernised state realism but a kind of civilisational realism, I would say.

N: In our first discussion, you said that the purpose of life is death, to return to eternity. Well, to be provocative, one could say that modernity (and in particular post-modernity), with its hyperactive approach to life, quickens up the return and indeed speeds up the timetable for the apocalypse. And multipolarity therefore by largely opposing modernity, steps back and delays the return and therefore the second coming of Christ.

D: There is a very interesting article which we published recently in Italian on geopolitica.ru about the *negative katechon*. I added to it a kind of common scheme of what delays or accelerates, and how the acceleration process and the delaying process link to the modern process of geopolitics. It is very interesting. I was introduced to the concept of a negative katechon (one that prevents positive development) by an Italian writer. And the katechon could try to prevent any change whether positive or negative. So the positive katechon tries to prevent or delay the negative coming, the coming of the Antichrist. That is the reason for the katechon. But the katechon could also be negative, because it delays the second coming of Christ. There is a special union between the positive katechon that prevents the coming of the Antichrist and the acceleration of the second coming of Christ. They should be together…

N: And multipolarity could be considered as a negative katechon because it delays the second coming of Christ…

D: No, multipolarity is a kind of combination of the positive acceleration and the positive katechon. According to Carl Schmitt, unipolarity is a combination of the so-called negative katechon (the British Empire with its global order, which was negative), as well as the voluntary acceleration of the coming of the Antichrist. There is a kind of collusion, a conspiracy between the negative katechon and negative acceleration. This is precisely uni-globalisation. But the scheme is more complicated. I suggest this

because it's very interesting and dialectic. And there is that third level, the middle level, where it is not yet clear what katechon we are dealing with or what acceleration we are dealing with. But there is a tension between delaying or accelerating. And there are two interpretations — positive and negative of both. This is a much more complicated scheme but it explains at least our vision. What is interesting is that the author of these articles — I don't know him — is Italian. And it was sent to me by a Sicilian princess whom I met some time ago and with whom I am friends. So, there is a development of exactly the same logic in Italy as well.

We had a brief stop to stretch our legs and rest our tongues (and brains for that matter, at least mine anyway). And while admiring the idyllic location, with its onion domed churches and golden wheat fields stretching out into infinity, an intriguing topic of conversation occurred to me.

N: What do the Russians say about the sacredness of the earth?

D: It's very important because there are two worlds in Russia. Firstly, the world of official ideology of the dukes or the state and their territory. The territory is considered as the place where taxes are collected in a different form. And then there is a concept of space embedded into the structure of all Russian history. The fight for space, the change between the form of property over territory and the giving of territory over heritage to boyars, was called 'votchina' and giving that to 'pomeshchiki', the temporary users. All

our history is around space but that is on one level. It was developed around one territory to collect taxes. And on the other level there was that space where the earth was a living being, a kind of divinity — Mother Earth. The peasants or people — 'narod' — have special relations towards that. It had nothing to do with taxes. So these two concepts were overlapping. What to the princes and boyars was the territory to collect taxes from, the same space to the peasants was a kind of living being with existential relations to people. It was not a kind of geometric space, it was a kind of ambience. And the peasants were living inside of the earth. The earth wasn't a surface, it was an ambience. They are living inside of the earth, surrounded by the earth. To them, the mystery of corn was the same as the mystery of life. You go under the earth and you come from the mother womb exactly as the corn comes from the earth. So, in the seed were your ancestors, your ancestors were alive. There was no place for definitive death in that situation and all events and history were precisely inside of the earth. The earth was ambience. When you contrast the state's concept of territory as place to pay and collect taxes with the peasant's vision of earth as ambience you will see that there was a gnosiological contradiction. Because what was for elite a kind of object (riches, possession, or property), for the peasants was living ambience. All the elements — fire, air, water etc. — inside of the earth. The earth was a special existential dimension of the living being, it was a kind of being in the world. It is the same with time. Time as chronology was the state's time, historical time. And there was the peasant's concept of time; eternity with the return of the same things, just like with corn. The metaphor of corn was at the centre. This was the explanation and key for their understanding of space and time. So, everything was linked to this concept of corn. It is their time and space, earth and eternity. And also the concept of subject was very different because the subject is dependent on hierarchical thinking and position. The Russian elite was very Western in its ontological and gnosiological attitude. What was a kind of analogous thing for the subject for the peasants is not so evident. It was the wind. The wind was considered to be a subject of history for the peasants. It is free, powerful and invisible and the basis of the concept of the people's understanding of what the spirit is. The wind could bend the powerful trees but it is invisible; that is, the force that goes from nowhere to nowhere. And that is a kind of model of freedom for the peasants, to be like the wind. The wind is not so much fast as it is powerful. And the wind is a male force. It is the force that awaits, a very special concept of the male. The peasant Russian wind represents a special form of linearity that as well can always change direction. It is not fixed as a subject like in the traditional understanding of European philosophy.

N: I suppose there is some similarity with this in European culture. The Ancient Greeks famously had the four wind deities: Boreas, Zephyros, Notus, and Eurus, and of course the keeper of winds, Aeolus. But they were slightly different in that they were not just abstract subjects but real characters and personalities. And their relations with

people was rather mixed. For example, Aeolus helpfully gives Odysseus a bag of wind to enable him to get home, while icy Boreas was generally feared and gentle Zephyros was welcomed as the messenger of spring.

D: Yes, interesting. But in Russian peasant life the wind is key to their anthropology. So man is the wind, and that is interesting. And there is a beautiful song by David Bowie called *Wild is the Wind*. Initially, I wondered how Bowie, an Englishman, had such a deep understanding of this, but after a while I discovered that the composers of the song were Russian. The wind has a kind of ethnic identity, the wind is Russian, in the sense that Russians put it in the centre of a hidden peasant philosophy.

N: Yes, very curious. And what about the other symbols of the earth like the forests and golden fields, which we see before us here? Did they take on some sort of spiritual dimension as well?

D: Yes, the state was considered to be a kind of heaven; that is, with its Apollonian logic, subject and space. The Church was part of the state and considered to be the heavenly dimension and functioned as such. But that was a kind of other Logos, not a natural Logos, but a kind of transcendental harassment imposed on us as the beauty and paradise of heaven on earth. But the earth in Russia was Dionysian and not Cybelian. The importance of the earth was not in what is beneath. It was not so much a female principle. It was phenomenological, ambivalent and dialectical. Everything in Russian peasantry was Dionysian, light, and not so much fixed on the material world. There was no concept of matter. Body was a form, matter was absent. Matter was more or less equal to the forest. But the forest was not a natural ambience of Russian life, rather the field or more precisely the corn[14] was. And the forest was the Other, it was not a part of Russian life, it was the beginning of matter. The earth wasn't in the forest. The forest was a kind of shadow of the earth. The earth was the field. The holy field, the sacred field was most important, along with the river.

N: What does the river symbolise?

D: Life, and the male principle, although we have two different sexes for the river. For example, the Don was male and the Dnieper was female.

N: Why was that?

D: I don't know. But it's an interesting observation.

We had reached the beginning of the end of our journey. Now it was time to decamp from the car and squeeze into a tractor's cart in order to be conveyed through the impenetrable forest to the monastery. Unperturbed by these events, we continued our conversation about the history of the Russian land.

D: …the Kazakhs came later, it was a newly conquered territory, while the Black Sea was a Turkish inner lake…

N: And what is Vladivostok like?

D: I've never been there. But it is interesting that that part of Siberia was populated by Ukrainians. It is called 'Green Ukraine' because a great part of the population was made up of Ukrainians. No one lived there, then a very huge amount of land was given by the government to everybody for free and it provoked a large migration from the west of Russia. So it is called Great Green Ukraine because the majority there (around Vladivostok and the Amur river) were Ukrainians.

N: Yes, with such curious facts like that, I imagine it would be fascinating to do the Trans-Siberian railway journey.

D: I haven't done it… I guess it might be quite boring. Because here in Vladimir, Suzdal, Arzamas, Nizhny Novgorod — this is deep Russia, real Russia.

N:…Ancient Russia.

D: Yes, it was an eastern part of European Russia. It is not so very old, but it is precisely deep. The roots of the Muscovite identity are here. The other key for pre-Vladimir Russia was Kiev as a state with a more Slavic identity. Here it was a bit different, much more calm…

N: So, you acknowledge that going back in your history you have a different foundational identity other than Ukrainian?

D: Yes. But, it is interesting that in Western Ukraine there were two identities: Galicia and Volhynia.

N: Not to mention the influence of Poland and Austro-Hungary on that part of Ukraine…

D: Yes, that as well, but not only that; before that, two principalities were in constant struggle — Volhynia in the north and Galicia in the south. And they were populated by different peoples; the so-called White Croats in Volhynia and the Halych in Galicia. The Lendians and Rusyns are the descendants of the south Western population of Galicia, and Malorossiya was Kievan, it was a territory around Kiev and Pereslavl, and not Western Ukraine. Western Ukraine was completely different from the beginning, not only when Volhynia was a part of Poland and Galicia was under Austria, but long before. Russia is not so united and there are different lines in its political history. So it is a little more complicated.

N: So spiritually and culturally it is more linked, is it just politically where things differ…

D: Yes, but there is a term *Velikorossiya* or 'Greater Russia', which is relevant here. Velikorossiya stretches from Moscow, Vladimir, Arzamas to Nizhny Novgorod and it was considered 'Greater Russia' in a similar manner to 'Greater Greece'[15] . 'Greater Greece' was Italy. So, the idea of 'Great' meant outside of the continent of Greece. 'Small Greece' is continental Greece. So, 'Greater Russia' was outside of 'Small Russia', but 'Small Russia' is the core. So it is called 'Small Russia' — *Malorossiya*

— not because it's reduced but because it is the core. 'Small Russia' was the core of Russia around Kiev. And then there was an expansion which led to an additional Russia. 'Greater Greece' or 'Greater Russia' is meant not in the sense of a city-state but as something additional — an expansion. The same thing with 'Greater Sweden'. Because to the Swedes 'Small Russia' was called 'Greater Sweden', and Scandinavian Sweden was called 'Small Sweden'.

N: In your view, where does Russia actually start — Kiev, Novgorod, Vladimir?

D: Russia starts in Kiev, absolutely. Or rather first in Novgorod and after that in Kiev. And the second half of early Russian history was competition between East and West, between the Great Principality of Vladimir and Lithuania. Lithuania, having seized Polotsk, Kiev and the Western Russian lands, became a kind of political heir to Kiev. The competition was very interesting. From the beginning it wasn't clear which part of Russia would win. And after the Mongolian invasion, the Lithuanians represented Russia much more than Eastern Russia. Most of the Russian Orthodox population lived in the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. And they had a chance to define the future for Russia as they were stronger, more powerful and more attractive. There were moments when Eastern Russia — that is, Vladimir — could have become part of this Western Lithuanian Russia. And the Duchy of Lithuania wasn't ethnically bounded. The population was Slavic and Orthodox but Polish Catholicism won in the end. This was the reason it failed, because they didn't integrate the Eastern Russian Orthodox population properly. They imposed their very strict, exclusivist, absolute vision and they failed for that reason. They failed in acquiring all of Russia, although the Lithuanians had the potential skill to integrate Russia; they were tolerant, friendly, and Orthodox Christians felt comfortable in Lithuania. There was a chance for them. They could have converted to Orthodoxy or they could have stayed Catholics. And they could have decided the future of Russia, but Polish Catholicism destroyed that.

To my astonishment we had finally arrived at our destination and so our conversation for the day ended there. We were warmly greeted by nuns, a learned looking priest, a shepherd and a goat or two: perhaps this was a pleasant foreshadowing of the morrow's events.

July 30

N: Why exactly have you chosen to bring us to this monastery? What special meaning does it have for you?

D: Maybe it is chance or Providence, but I met the sisters of this monastery working with icons and they invited me here. Later on, I met Father Vladimir who is the chief of the monastery. And very soon we became friends because he's interested in philosophy,

traditionalism, and theology in a way that is very close to my own way. I have a mutual understanding with different religious figures because I'm a kind of conservative fundamentalist Orthodox. But what was special about Father Vladimir was the profound philosophical dimension of his faith — that was the first impression. And this monastery is in a very particular place; it is very far from cities, towns and even villages. It is in the forest, ten kilometres from the nearest village and very difficult to find because there are no roads. So you need to go through the forest. There is no electricity, there is almost no civilisation in the technical sense. And I think that there's a way of life to keep here. The nuns work with their hands on traditional activity, pray to God, and read philosophical books. There is a great library here in the house of Father Vladimir with the best books on philosophy, sociology, anthropology, and theology of course. But to combine a traditional way of life with the highest achievements of intellectual thought and tradition — I find that fantastic, and it agrees precisely with my ideal vision. So, no technological thought and the same work with traditional crafts, and a traditional way of life in the forest with nature and with a deep patriotic feeling of the traditional community. It is a kind of holy Russia, the Holy Mother Russia, which is represented by this monastery. It is an example that shows that such a way of living is possible now. People say, 'Oh, we're living in modern times now, so we're obliged to have some technological means…'. But there is no electricity here, and no iPhones. You can feel what it is like to be a human being independent from technological infrastructure. You are still human, and maybe even more human than otherwise. And you can speak about philosophical, theological, sociological and cultural questions on a very high level. You are on the stones. You can find new knowledge, and that is very dynamic. It's not static, there is no stagnation It is a dynamic spiritual life free from technological infrastructure and very far from so-called civilisation. I think that this is the way of salvation for Mother Russia, for our people, because it is the same profound and pure way of living which I think was precisely the type of living in traditional Russia because Russia was based on the peasant and monastic way of life. So, this unity between the traditional peasant life and the spiritual health of Christian asceticism, mysticism and theology — I adore both sides of that. The simple life of a peasant and the complicated life of spiritual development, mystical development in beautiful Russian nature, and with beautiful Russian people. It is not a kind of utopia because utopia means that that place doesn't exist. It is rather a 'topos'. I think that this place, this 'topos' is in a deeper sense more sacred that every other place. I think that there is something connected to 'being' in space, 'being' in history, and 'being' in Russia. So, it is an existential space because existence or *Dasein* in a Heideggerian sense is an ever thinking presence. I think that this theological, mystical, and philosophical aspect or level of monastic life is very important because it is presence, sinking presence, or intellectual presence. I think that the purest form of

human life is to work with your hands, and to be inside of the world, not as an object in the world, but as a living being and be concentrated on prayer, thoughts, meditation and the purification of the soul. So that is precisely what in my eyes Russia should be, and the Russian people should be. We should return to the roots, but not to the past, because we are living in the 21st century. And the sisters are artists; they have chosen this life, not because of some necessity. It is a free choice for a very good place in life. And it is not a return to the past, but to the same eternal form of life. I think that it is a kind of option for the future, if you want it. Eternity is a very fresh thing, it is not an everlasting sameness… Eternity is very rich because time cannot exhaust it. Eternity always has something else. Time can realise, mirror, reflect only a part of eternity, an infinitely small part of it. So, eternity exceeds any form of time and is always fresh. If you reflect a part of eternity from that, you get the possibility of the future. A future that will be new. So, eternity is very full. It is not the past, it is not something that you already know. I think that is why putting eternity at the centre of concerns is so important in the Sofronieva wilderness — this place that I really adore. After coming here for the first time, I cannot stop coming back. For me it is a kind of centre. I think that only when there is such distance from technological civilisation is it possible to have a real spiritual centre. So, coming so far from Moscow, from other cities, including far from villages, is a kind of restoration of the centre. It is not formal because here you have people with thoughts, with prayers, with work, with a healthy and sane spiritual form of being. So, let us return to the roots.

N: When you say that we should live a life that is based around eternity, what exactly do you mean by this? Is there a particular age when you believe man lived his life centred solely on eternity? And one could argue that man's conception and understanding of eternity has evolved over time, so from what age and understanding of eternity are you drawing from?

D: I think that if we are speaking about eternity, we should speak not at all about the repetition of the same thing. If there are some changes in the secondary aspect, that is not so important. What is important is eternal life and the understanding of God. God should be put at the centre of human life because God is something absolute. And our life, our society and all the rest are related; they are not absolute. I think that in that sense the essence should be eternal. And when we put all being into a state of becoming, we are moving further away from eternity. But having God as the centre of our life, our concern, and our culture is essential. And I think that Orthodox tradition, liturgy, sayings, the Church calendar, chant and icons are the Russian way to eternity. But I don't think that they fit everybody. In my multipolar vision of the world, I don't insist at all that everybody should come to our Russian eternity.

N: But you still think that all Russians (regardless of their belief) should come to it, though?

D: Yes, but not all the others and not exactly to this small monastery. It should be a kind of ideal, a norm, an archetype, but evidently for Russians. So, what is important? The concept of a monk is at the centre of Orthodox civilisation. Traditionally a monk was an archetype of the human. Why? Because the monk is a human being totally dedicated to God, with no other concerns. Is a monk a good worker or not a good worker, an artist or not — these questions are secondary, quite secondary. The most important thing is the personal relation of the man to his creator, God. That is why a monastery should be put at the centre of our culture. And this was the case during the traditional periods of our history. In that sense the monastery should be respected as the norm. It is interesting that the rules for the monks of the monastery were considered traditionally as the only rule for any Christian Orthodox man or woman. We had no special rules for monks and then different rules for other normal Christians. Because we considered the monk as a man and even if we could not be or didn't want to become a monk, we still should respect the monk as the normative. We should have the same fasting and the same habits, except for marriage, in all other aspects of religious life. The only difference is that the monk follows these rules in a strict way, while the laity follow them in a less strict way. So, you should follow these rules, but if you don't, it's up to you. There are no different rules for secular people, they have the same ones. In that sense the monastery is the ideal and normative form of human society based on equality, love, and dedication to what is most important; that is, to God as eternity. The monastery is created around that point and with no other concerns. First of all your relation to God (from your heart to God) is all, it is the only thing that really matters, it is the ideal form of being. But you mentioned that there is something to run from. Yes, but we should not be so concerned about this spiritual periphery. There is always something to run from. There's always someone we want to get away from, but that is a spiritual periphery of life. It might be technology like today or maybe it might be, for example, the big cities of Byzantium, or capitals in general, or countless other things. The monastery is the eternal centre of man, and there is always engagement in time. So, the real path of man should be from time to eternity. And there is always the periphery of time which is completely engaged in becoming. We need to go from becoming to eternity, from becoming to being — which is eternal. What is becoming? What kind of becoming should we have? It should be the good form of becoming that encourages us to return to eternity. This is a good periphery as it shows the way to the centre. The bad form of periphery is, for example, that which neglects this dimension or refuses it or denies it. For example, we could live in a society with no monasteries at all, nor hidden forest monasteries, and where there is no eternity and no God. A place where you are so engaged in becoming that you have no chance of returning to eternity. So, that's the worst kind of becoming, which prohibits this return to eternity. There is always a periphery, there is always becoming, there is always time, but the worst kind of time is

the time that denies the existence of eternity and that is precisely modernity. Modern Western society is based on the general principle that there is no such thing as eternity. Instead, everything is becoming, everything is time, everything is history. That is why I consider the majority to be absolutely wrong. But, if you have some point, some monastery hidden somewhere that might be very, very difficult to reach, then not everything is lost. So, there is a chance for Russia, which is represented by myself personally, that is the image of the place, a concrete place, concrete people and concrete tradition, concrete historic periods where this monastery is restored in a way. For me that is the ideal, but I think that for other Russian people there could be other monasteries in other places. Maybe you can find your grand Russian way to eternity with your spiritual father, or with your tradition, but it is more or less the same, because there's Orthodox fathers, there are Orthodox nuns, sisters, there might be a brotherhood somewhere, and another monastery. And there is Mount Athos for the entire Orthodox civilisation because Mount Athos is considered to be the temple of eternity for the Orthodox tradition. We could enlarge the way (to eternity) or make it more narrow. I think that the other traditions, cultures and civilisations have their own ways to reach eternity, quit the periphery of becoming and reach the centre. The centre and eternity are what is important. But for Russians, we have our own way, our own tradition of how to deal with it. I think that the Catholic tradition has another way to eternity which is not so different to ours; it has monasteries, monks, and the tradition of mystical contemplation, purity and so on. But, for example, in Protestantism there was the mystical current with Jakob Böhme and with other pre-Protestant mystics such as Meister Eckhart, Johannes Tauler, Heinrich Seuse, and John Wycliffe — the English mystical philosopher who is considered to be a forerunner of the Protestant Reformation. Every culture has its own way. For example, in Islam there is Sufism or Shiism, which provide a way precisely to the centre, with no monastery or Christian tradition, but that is their way of dealing with the escape from becoming and going from the periphery to the centre. In other traditions there are different ways. So, I don't think that the Russian example or my personal preference for this monastery is for everyone. It is the principle that is important, the centrality of eternity. And I suggest that this principle be recognised as universal as was the case in traditional society. So, that is my position. I am against modernity because it has forgotten and prohibited the eternal dimension of life, discredited it, mocked it and created a kind of civilisation based on time and on becoming. And in losing this dimension of transcendence we have lost our humanity as well because humanity has its meaning in relation to its source. You cannot stay human when you are losing your God. You are already subhuman. The Humanist Revolution in order to achieve the truth of man was against God, against transcendence and against the sacred. But that was the wrong way, you cannot achieve the truth about men by killing God. And that is why now in this modernity we are arriving at a post-modernity where there is an exchange of

humanity for emissions. That is the next step, I think. First of all, man killed God, as Nietzsche said. And this was a suicide, it was not a killing at all, it was suicide at the worst scene in the Christian tradition. By committing suicide, humanity is coming into becoming absolutely, and that, as well, is the end of the human. So, the appearance of robots or artificial intelligence was just a matter of time. Now we are coming to the point when machines will replace humans. I think that this monastery symbolises a salvation that is Russian, modern, concrete in space and time, and presents an alternative form of living. Being a human is possible without iPhones and electricity. You are still human. Indeed, you may be more human with God than with an iPhone, electricity, money, social career, good position, and comfort. I think that it is important to see that you can be human, maybe more human than elsewhere, without these things. And that is why I suggested to come here to see an example of the realisation of what I think is an alternative to the wrong side of modernity. That it is not only a dream or an artificial construction; it can be realised and is not so exceptional, finally. Now in Russia there is a kind of general return to this form of life, which was absolutely non-existent during the Soviet period. And this is very interesting, that it is not only a continuation of the tradition, but it is a *conservative revolution.* We are assisting Russia now in a *conservative revolution*, a return to eternity. And sometimes there is a gap; this monastery was closed in 1929. There was nothing here, just the forest, for almost a hundred years, the Soviet Union destroyed this dimension of eternity and put everything in time, and progress in technology, mocking the priests and monks, and prohibiting monasteries. And finally, in spite of all this pressure, in spite of cutting ties with the past, the return has reappeared, re-manifested itself. So, it is something more than just keeping the same tradition, it is a kind of active and voluntary restoration of this dimension. And it is the personal case of Father Vladimir and the nuns of this monastery. They came from post-Soviet St Petersburg and had well paid positions in the modern and liberal post-Soviet society. They came here into the wilderness in order to restore eternity, not the past. It is very symbolic, I think. And that is more or less the destiny or the situation where the majority of actual Russian monasteries are. So, it is not just continuing the tradition; it is a restoration. It is thought based on imitating the past, on the will of God, transcendence, and the will that is manifesting itself. It is a conscious and willing process. That is very interesting. It is an example that after all the catastrophes of communism, the people can still survive with their spiritual dimension, with their heart, and with their demand for an identity that can be put into practice. It is an example to follow. Thus, in any civilisation it is possible. For example, the West or Islamic countries didn't suffer such aggression against religion and the traditional way of life. But we have still survived in spite of it. And that is an example. It is not a kind of convention, it is not something artificial. The demand for eternity, for God is there. It is not so important whether God exists or not. The demand for God exists in the heart of

man, and that is more important. And this demand precisely is the reflection of real eternity. We need God. We need Him. This need for God is creative. It's very powerful because it obliges us to restore the monastery, to restore worship, to create, to build new churches and restore the old ones. This need is precisely, in my eyes, the human essence, the need for transcendence. Finally, we are the witnesses of God and we witness the existence of God by our own existence, and by our own will to venerate, glorify, and praise God. So it is not due to practical reasons, but to human dignity to be like that, I think.

N: Your desire to put God back at the centre of life is certainly clear and praiseworthy. But where does justice fit into your vision? And how would you define justice? Do you follow the Platonic concept of justice, where everyone knows their position and role in life and dutifully keeps to it? You have already defined quite rigidly what Russian national identity and society should be like, but then what about the fact that Russia also recognises other religions (like Judaism, Islam and Buddhism). Should these groups know their place and stick to that or should they all be put into an Orthodox conception of justice? And if so, who decides what is the right place for each person or group? Finally, how would you implement your vision of justice?

D: First of all, I think that nothing is absolutely universal. It's my personal philosophical concept that there are many absolutes. This is a paradox. And it is very easy to criticise such products or expressions because they are consciously based on the paradox that there can be only one absolute. But I consider universalism and unity in a Neo-Platonic way; that is, *unity is not ontological*. So, if you have something as a 'being', that is not unity, because there is 'being' and 'non-being'. That is the logic of Plato in his *Parmenides* dialogue, and that is an explanation of how many absolutes could coexist. Every absolute that *is* is already affected by being (and by contrast with not-being as a necessary pair for the very definition of being) and his unity is somehow undermined. The real absolute absolute can not be — it is in its *inexistence* (in a positive way). This is apophatic unity. In that sense, the concept of justice, exactly as any other concept, should be reduced to its cultural being. For example, there is a completely different meaning in this word in Russian, Latin, German, Turkish, Jewish cultures. For example, in Judaism justice means an objective judgment, including punishment. But grace also has a position relative to justice. So, if you ask me what is most important in the Russian system of values — grace or justice — I would say grace, absolutely. So, just (or unjust) grace; that is, you should love your enemies. It is not just, absolutely, because they are enemies. And you should love sinners, even if they are sinners. And you should be just in dealing with and punishing sinners. And both of them, grace and justice, have a place in our system of values. But I think that in our case love and grace are much more important for us than justice, for example, if we…

N: But you haven't defined what justice is exactly.

D: Justice corresponds to some rule. For example, if God were not just towards us, mankind would be lost because the only hope for us is grace. We have committed sins and done evil deeds, but we will nevertheless be accepted by the grace of God and his kingdom. Not because we are right, but because he is too loving, he loves us too much and he could pardon our sins. That, I think, is the essence of the understanding of justice. Justice is a correspondence to a norm. But grace is the overwhelming love that can save the sinner and help the people who have no dignity at all, who don't deserve this grace. And I think that the balance between justice and grace in our Orthodox Christian culture is absolutely in favour of grace. As I mentioned before, the Judaic understanding of justice is precisely based on judgment; if you are morally good, you will be pardoned and accepted, but if you are not, you will be punished. We have something like that as well in our tradition, but grace and love outweigh everything else. In the Islamic tradition, in the normal Sharia concept, there is no such thing as love; indeed, there is no love at all, nor grace. Rather, Islam is based on justice in the classical sense. And I think that there is a difference here. For them, if you deserve the punishment, you should receive it with no pardon. To pardon someone is to commit a crime against justice, whereas in Christianity it's quite the opposite. I think that these examples show that we cannot force our understanding of justice onto others because in doing so we would destroy their concept of justice. We need to accept cultures as they are. We may agree with some of them or we may disagree with some of them, but we cannot pretend to not be Russian, Muslim, Jewish, Buddhist, or Chinese. It is just an absolutely false pretension, including when we don't recognise who we are; we are still precisely those who share this identity with our culture. So we think, 'Oh no, I'm just Alexander'. But, I could not be just Alexander, I am Russian Alexander, you are English Nick. But nevertheless, we can belong to the same Christian civilisation or not, or to the atheist civilisation. And this defines our identity. How can we pass this instance of our culture and arrive at some universality? By discarding this we will reach a universality with zero content, as a purely technical creature, and finally as a robot. So only robots are universal. Men are totally defined by their identity, language, cultural biology, history, and heritage in any sense, positive or negative. So I think in that sense only robots or racists, which are almost the same typologically, could pretend to possess a universal rule or universal protocols to define what justice is for a Russian, Muslim, or Chinese. If we pretend to do so, there are only two possibilities: either we are totally dead machines that ignore any cultural differences and have no identity at all, or we are simply racists, trying to project our own identity, our own understanding of what is justice or grace, or something like that, onto everybody. So either whether we are conquerors and imperialist racists thinking that our identity is the best one or a universal one, or we are robots that don't possess any identity at all, just a pure mechanical form. I think that the modern globalist West is both. They are racist robots — a kind of

mechanical application of one type of culture brought to its uttermost conclusion. On the one hand, it's the expansion of Western values and systems. At the same time, it pretends to be objective and technical. Human rights based on a complete understanding of what is human and what is right in Western liberal culture is imposed by technical means on all humanity, without asking others if they agree with this or not. I think, in that sense, justice as any other concept, notion or word has a concrete historical and cultural meaning. We could think about a translation. For example, when an English man speaks with a Russian man about justice, first they need to discuss the historical differences between Orthodoxy, German identity, Slavic identity, mutual relations or particularities, the different debates inside their culture, and after that they could arrive at something, not agreement, but mutual understanding of differences and some common context and meaning. But if we invite a third person (a Muslim) and if we don't want to convert this Muslim immediately, for example, to Catholicism or Orthodoxy, and if we agree that he has the right to continue to be a Muslim, we need to enlarge our conversation about justice and ask the Muslim his opinion. And he may be Arab, African, Iranian, Turkish, or Indonesian, and this will affect very much what we will hear about how he understands justice. Formally he will still be Muslim, but he might distinguish the levels of understanding, if he is competent, for example. It's not always the case, but in that case it could be something objective and really Islamic in such explanations. But it could be completely wrong or very partial and a very subjective definition of justice. So, before speaking of the universality of justice, and before asking if the Russian understanding of justice is correct, universal, and fits the Western or Islamic conception, before that we need to organise a dialogue of civilisations. And if we want to achieve something, it is only in the United Nations where we can discuss with all the representatives of human cultures. We need to work for many years preparing the possibility to use this word in its true sense in the UN. Otherwise it will be as I have said, either a chaotic misunderstanding or used in a purely racist way. For example, the French could come to teach the people of the world what justice is. It's a normal Western procedure when a so-called higher agency promotes a universal concept. But this is purely racist, if the French teach everybody else — the Africans, Latin Americans, Chinese, etc. — what justice is. It is pure imperialism of words and notions. In my multipolar concept we need to listen and ask first. We need to study the others first, and after that we might arrive or maybe not at some common ground in defining justice. I think that there is such a possibility, but it is a very difficult task. It demands a philosophical dialogue on a profound level, and the linguistic expertise of the best specialists in semantics and linguistics. It demands historical background, clarifying and explaining. It demands as well a philosophical dimension and anthropologists from the school of Franz Boas and Claude Lévi-Strauss. If we had such a team, we could speak easily for many years about what justice could finally mean for

humanity. But apart from such preparations, I think it will be purely a monologue of one civilisation or the language of a machine.

N: But one could say that you have taken a lofty and heavenly concept like Justice and just subordinated it to national and cultural factors. I wonder if you have the same approach to humanity as well. Do you recognise the common bond between all mankind? Or do you put nation above humanity itself?

D: Great! A very pertinent question. First of all, I think that to be human is an open question. And if we consider, for example, the so-called new anthropology; that is, the multi-naturalism of Viveiros de Castro, a Brazilian anthropologist. He said that multiculturalism is not enough, it is not really realistic because it considers that we are dealing with the same nature. But if we ask Indians or the people from the Amazon River, they have a completely different concept of nature. We consider them to be underdeveloped and recognise their culture as a possible human illusion, whereas we know the truth. And that is purely racist. So Indians, according to Viveiros de Castro, think that birds are humans, that bears are humans, that fish are humans, and that the ghosts of the dead are humans. Humans like ourselves, but put in different natures. So the problem is not culture; the problem is nature. And if we exclude the humanity of a bird, a fish, a serpent, or a snake, in the same step we exclude these groups from humanity, or we think that Indians are completely wrong to think in such way. In my vision, to be a human cannot be an answer. It is a question. So, in answering your question, for me I cannot be human without being Russian. I am not a human without being Russian. I am nobody without being Russian; neither a human nor a snake. I have no culture, no space, no time, no subject, no object, no God, no humanity. I am nobody without my language, without my culture, my history, my tradition, my identity. I am a robot in the purest sense, or I am nothing, not even a robot, because a robot is a Western thing. What is human? We should ask Russians what is a human. We should ask Englishmen what they think is human and what is not. We should ask Indians why they consider a bird or a snake or a ghost to be humans. We should ask Russians, Chinese, Africans, Eskimo people… I feel we should even ask the cat as well what it thinks. Because, for example, cats belong to space and dogs belong to their master. Cats follow space and dogs follow their master, who knows the truth? What is human? Or what is normal — space or a master, a dog or a cat, an Indian, an Englishman, or a Russian? We need to consult every being finally. For example, what this human being or this culture with this language, for example, thinks about being a human. What is the name for human in its culture? So *human* is a more general definition. And I don't think we can be human without fully realising what it means to be Russian, what it means to be English, what it means to be Indian. And different Indian tribes may have very different answers for that. For example, there is a small tribe, the Pirahã tribe, that cannot count. So if we think that for a human it is normal to count, to have numbers, we're wrong — it is not

human. The majority of humans can count, but if you ask the Pirahã how many fingers you have they will respond, 'some.' Are they still humans? In my opinion, absolutely! And I agree with them if they, for example, call *human* what in my eyes is a ghost of the dead, and invite him to a United Nations conference, because they have the right to do so. That is their anthropology and that is their culture. And I think that is real multipolarity. So when we pretend to be humans without being Russians, we commit a gnosiological crime because we pretend to be universal directly without having a real heritage, a real part in this belonging. Humanity is a kind of apophatic concept. It is unity that should be created. It is a kind of belief, a kind of church, a kind of notion that we need to establish. Now, humanity doesn't exist, we only have Western liberal or globalist robots. That's not humanity. We miss the majority of humans in such a definition. I think that humanity doesn't exist yet. It could exist, a human being should exist. But we need to work hard first of all to destroy this monopoly of the definition of what is human from the aggressive globalist liberal West. And only after that should we try to ask the cats, or Indians, or Africans, or shamans, or Buddhists, because Buddhists have their own concept of what is human. It's not important at all to be human or to be a thing in the Zen Buddhist tradition. According to their tradition, a mountain can walk. If we live in a world with walking mountains, we surely should either accept that, and that will considerably enlarge our understanding of what is real or not. Or we should discard it as a kind of fantasy, but that is a kind of imperialist action. That is colonisation. If you say Buddhists are wrong in pretending that a mountain can walk as some Zen Buddhist masters believe, we behave as nationalists, chauvinists, xenophobes, and Nazis. And I think Nazism is possible, as globalism is possible, as liberalism is possible, the Western colonisation is possible and actual. But I refuse to recognise it as normative. It is possible, it exists. I don't like it at all, but I recognise it as a status quo. But I don't think it is legitimate. So when we pretend to speak about humanity without speaking about the English, French, European, Asian, African, Buddhist, and Russian ideas about this, it is an act of colonial racism.

N: Which came first: Adam or Russia? These nations were constructed over time, and are based on social and geographical factors. But they are secondary in comparison to God's primary and divine creation of man. So, in that sense, you are putting the cart before the horse. It is not inclusivity at all, but discrimination based on secondary factors. You are prioritising the transient secondary above the divine primary.

D: We cannot arrive at Adam without Russia. So the concept of Adam without the reality of living a Russian life is meaningless. That is why in our traditional chronicles there was always an explanation of how we have arrived at being rational Englishmen, Germans or Italians through Adam, Japheth and others. We have our own special relationship to Adam, and we could not discard the segments of this chain, and still pretend to be Adam. If we say, 'Oh no, we are not the descendants of Japheth,' we cut

the tie and then we are not Adam anymore. We have no access to it. That is why, for example, the founding fathers of Russia, or the mythological fathers of Germany, had a genealogy in pagan times that traced lineage from the gods and in Christian times a lineage from the tribes of the sons of Noah. And this is important. Adam is given to us through the chain of his descendants. This chain passes through Noah, Japheth, the Semites, the Indo-Europeans and others who recognised Adam as their father. There is, for example, an Indian tribe that recognises a leopard as their Adam. So if we consider them to be idiots, or stupid, or undeveloped, we are racists. I am not a racist. In that sense, my way to Adam is through my Russian ancestors and without this link I have no access to him. In that case, if I deny Russia, I deny Adam, I deny humanity. So, the modern Western concept of humanity is either liberal Anglo-Saxon or nothing. And that I am wrong because I am Russian. Throughout these interviews we are speaking about the same thing more or less; that is, how to understand the Other, plurality, unity, and universality, and how we can enlarge or question or doubt these concepts and what they mean. I think that this is really important. Certainly, if we ask all these kinds of questions, trying to understand Russia or ourselves or the West better, it is completely legitimate and very important. But if we try to reinforce the existing knowledge and try to judge the Other once more, I think we will miss the point. Dialogue is when you are ready to listen and try to seize the meaning. Sometimes it's very difficult and we prefer to stay with what we already know, but that is a kind of limitation.

N: Yes, I absolutely agree that this dialogue should be about trying to understand ourselves and each other better and not to judge the other. However, I think possibly one conclusion we may have come to is that, frankly, neither position seems satisfactory. You claim that the universalist Western position is imperialist and racist, while one could argue that your multipolar position just descends into relativist chaos and absurdity because you accept everything.

D: No, not anything.

N: You just said that a mountain or a monkey can be human and that even cats should decide what it means to be human. If you accept all this together with the Judeo-Christian conception of man, you seem to fall prey to relativism and its inherent traps: if everything is possible, then nothing is possible, and if everything is true, then nothing is true. So, perhaps, we need a third way, a way that avoids these pitfalls…

D: No, I think that relativism is not in opposition to this racism. Oh no! In other words, that is the Western way of thinking to oppose the existing unity. And I'm not a defendant of relativity. I believe that I am a descendent of Adam through my Russian ancestors. I live with that. But I can recognise the human dignity of an Indian who believes that he is the descendant of a wild cat, for example. I am able to recognise him. I don't accept that as my truth, but I can easily see that it is his truth. But that is not relativism, because relativism is based on the idea that we know that there is only one

truth. For example, we are the descendants of Adam and that is an absolute truth for me and for the Indian…

N: No, recognising human dignity in others is one thing (and a very Christian idea by the way, for example not all faiths/cultures would agree with this). But saying that their truth is also possible as well as ours is relativism because you believe that truth depends on local reasoning, norms and customs. And thus an absolute truth for one person is not the same for the other. And it is only with this relativist reasoning that you can say in the same breath that it is possible that a wild cat was the father of man, and that God was the father of man.

D: Why not? We believe in what we believe, in what truth is for us.

N: Well, you can do this. But then you are stuck in the position where there is no ultimate truth.

D: Maybe there is, but maybe we are all wrong.

N: That's why I'm saying that both approaches don't seem to work…

D: No, I think maybe we're partly wrong, partly right…

N: And so dialogue helps…

D: Maybe during this dialogue, with respect and recognition of the mutual dignity of humanity we can define and understand better what Adam is and what the wild cat is. Maybe speaking about Adam we are not speaking about something completely clear, defined, and taken for granted. Maybe Adam is the problem. Maybe in the name of Adam, the figure of Adam, the reality of Adam, maybe there is a question mark. Maybe Adam, who we believe to be a man as such, is maybe an open question, maybe he is a kind of apophatic figure. I named my book about the German Logos *Apophatic Man*. I used Meister Eckhart's term. He developed the concept of the three men inside of us: man as a body, man as a soul, and a hidden apophatic man inside the soul, which is almost non-existent because he is not accepted and known by us. We normally orient ourselves just between the first and the second men, but there is also a third man. So when we are speaking about Adam, what do we mean? In speaking with an Indian who has some special belief that he is a descendant of a wild cat, we might understand better the nature of what the Russians, Christians, English, Muslims, or Jews understand by Adam. Maybe this general definition of our belonging is much more complicated, or maybe not. I don't think that relativism or absolutism and universalism are the only two solutions. I think that both are not enough, but it is not so easy to go the third way. And I see which ways certainly don't lead there. For example, if we continue to insist on universalism in the modern way it will end in an impasse. If we oppose this simply by relativism — that there is no truth at all and we should seek this truth — it is an impasse as well. And that is clear. When I hear the sound of sameness, of relativism, or universalism, I feel it clearly and I say, 'No, stop.' But when we try to search for the other way we are going in the way of paradox and that is not easy. It is not simple, it is

not evident, for the majority because the majority are living in a universalist and racist reality, including the Chinese, and including this interesting Pirahã tribe who only consider themselves to be human, while the other people living on the other side of the river are subhuman. For example, the fact that the Pirahã cannot count the fingers on their hand and the other tribe can, doesn't serve as a valid argument for anythign — they simply don't care about counting. And you could not force them through normal debate to recognise the superiority of being able to count over not being able to count. You would need to force them to learn how to count. But that is completely racist. It is not easy to transcend a kind of racist, chauvinist attitude and that is why you try to escape from it with the help of relativism. So, I think that relativism is a kind of negative image, the shadow of this universalism and racism. Both of them lead to a dead end. I think we need to find a way out of that. It's not easy or self-evident. I think that in post-modernism, in liberalism there is a kind of will or kind of desire to overcome this universalism, but at the same time there is an evident failure to do so. Maybe in some sense I'm in favour of globalisation — understood as the multipolar dialogue between cultures — against Western colonial universalism, but in the present situation it is a new form of the same racism and imperialism. If some authors, either left or right, promote an epistemological war against universalism, we could become friends with them. But if they recognise — and some of them agree with — the EU's main idea of individualist anthropology, this leads to nothing because it's an empty Western concept. It is a new form of imperialism and racism. Individualism is the same concept as Aryanism in Nazi philosophy. If you apply Aryanist doctrine to the explanation of history and society, you are a Nazi because you are dealing with some exclusive concept. For example, Jews in their racist understanding of Judaism are not so far from the Nazi idea. And if you say just the contrary that everybody is a Jew or everybody is Aryan, it is just the same, it's another version of Nazism. If you say that not only am I Aryan, but that you (a black person) are Aryan too, you deny the person the dignity to be black or the dignity not to be Aryan. And it is the same for a Jew. That is not the way to distribute your own identity to everybody. It is not the way to a real understanding of others. And that is precisely the problem with modern globalisation and universalism, or the universalism of human rights. I'm for human rights, but also I think that sometimes birds and snakes should be included, not in any forms, but they should find a way. When I contemplate cats I cannot help but confirm how wise they are, how moral they are. But according to Lawrence, cats are not so moral, rats are much more moral but nevertheless they commit… For example, here in the monastery there are two very strange stairways, leading to two attics where nobody lives. These are two special small stairways for cats. So I don't think they consider them to be simple animals because in Russian 'animal' stands for *zhivotnoe*, meaning 'life'. We are sharing life with them. If you create a stairway in order to facilitate access to the attic for a beloved cat, you treat

them almost as human. So, I think that you recognise their dignity and some value in them. One saint, for example, St Seraphim of Sarov, was a friend of a bear; they spent time together. I don't know what the subject of their communication was, but because Seraphim of Sarov performed many miracles, he managed somehow to communicate with a bear. I think that we should be very careful with borders between species, between peoples, between cultures. We shouldn't be too radical. Let a border be penetrable, a little bit transparent, but not completely, because if we stop distinguishing between cats and bears, then neither is this the right way. But let's give a big opportunity for everybody in this *multi-naturalism*, I would say.

July 31

After a bracing morning walk, we find a quiet spot in the shade and begin a taut geopolitical discussion.

N: I have heard that you are an important go-between in Russia-Turkey relations. How do you understand the Russian-Turkish relationship, a relationship which is fraught with historical and geopolitical complexity? And a little bird has told me that you also had a rather gripping experience during the attempted coup in Turkey on 15 July 2016. Can you tell me about it?

D: First of all, my understanding of the geopolitical relations between Russia and Turkey is placed in the context of Eurasianism. Russian identity is Eurasian identity, which includes not only Slavs, who are the central ethnic and cultural-historical group that created Russia, but other people as well, such as the Turks. Indeed, the majority of non-Slavic groups are Turks. And Turkish identity is very important for the Russian situation. If we consider what modern Turkey is, it's not only an ethnic state, because there are many other ethnic groups who live there, but is also the geopolitical heir of the Byzantine Empire. The Greek population and Slavic population always played a great part in the Balkans. Moreover, Turkish identity is Eurasian as well. It's not so much European, or Muslim, or Asian. It is Eurasian. That's why there is a similarity and affinity between Russia and Turkey, not only from a geopolitical point of view, but on the level of identity too. We are mostly Slavs and Orthodox, with a Turkish Muslim minority. The Turkish people are the majority in Turkey, but there is a large proportion of Georgians, Armenians, Kurds and so on. So it is not a national state, but a small empire. I started to develop relations between Russia and Turkey from the early 2000s, at the beginning of Erdogan's time, with the opposition to Erdogan, with people that shared anti-hegemonic, anti-globalist vision, such as Doğu Perinçek and the Patriotic Party (Vatan Partisi). I had close relations with them. I tried to change relations between Turkey and Russia for good by explaining to both peoples that the continuation of historical wars and conflict between our two countries will give positive results only to our common enemy — the West, the globalists.

N: But, isn't Turkey in many ways part of the West? It is, after all, a member of NATO, an EU candidate country and it enjoys a close relationship with the US.

D: My Turkish friends were against Turkey staying in NATO. They strongly criticised this position. They were in favour of an alliance with Russia, Iran, and China to create a multipolar world based on the idea of Great Spaces. They understand that the fight between Russia and Turkey, Muslims and Christians, will give new opportunity for establishing the globalist hegemony. They are leftists and they were put into prison. During the trial in this case I was mentioned by the judges as a kind of link to the people who were under arrest, and as a link to the Russian government. So, I was accused and many of my friends were imprisoned. And being in prison, they informed me that there are CIA or globalist groups in Turkey who try to destroy this nationalist Eurasian power, concentrated in military circles. I met very important generals and military chiefs and I talked to them. I was impressed that the highest military functionaries in Turkey were against Erdogan, whom they considered to be a traitor of Turkish identity and who sold men to the Saudis or to the West. They wanted to re-position Turkey in the Eurasian context. They were not fringe people or just dreamers; they were among the highest military people and they were all put in prison. I lost contact with them because of that. At some point there was a split between Erdogan's government and Fethullah

Gülen. According to the people in my circles, Gülen was worse than Erdogan; he is a committed globalist manipulated by the West. So I was prepared for everything that came later. Later my Eurasianist friends were released from prison. Right after that, there was the downing of the Russian plane. And we were on the edge of war with Turkey because Putin reacted quite radically. Emotionally and psychologically, it was quite right. We received a delegation of military experts who were put on trial during the case and later were freed from prison by Erdogan, one or two moments before coming to Russia. We presumed that they would like to speak with Russia about how to overcome the situation or overthrow Erdogan because this would be logical as they were his enemies. But when they came they said Erdogan didn't shoot down the plane. Today Erdogan has changed his position; he split with Gülen and his pro-Western network who shot down the plane. The more radical Eurasianists and Erdogan's former enemies who suffered during his time said it's better to establish good relations with Erdogan. They were not Erdogan's people. His people wouldn't pay any serious attention to the escalation of relations between Russia and Turkey. Erdogan's enemies had a history of being persecuted by Erdogan and being friends with him, that I knew. That was astonishing and serious. I got them in touch with serious circles in Russia who appreciated their information. They began the search for a peaceful way out. I was invited by the Patriotic Party (Vatan Partisi) once more in March 2016. This was comfortable for me. I was put in Erdogan's circles. They said the same thing; that there is a Gülenist coup d'état approaching and so they needed to try to reestablish relations between Russia and Turkey because it was not Erdogan, but the CIA who shot down the plane. Roughly speaking, that was the information coming not only from Erdogan's opposition, but from people close to him as well. I gave this information to the Kremlin and from then on we started to reposition ourselves. All the lobbyists who have assets in Turkey didn't participate in this because Putin was very radical in dismissing any economic reasons. This was a moral case for him and so reflected our voice completely because we are idealists who had information devoid of economic or personal dimensions. That's a rare thing in Russia because everyone lobbies for something and is often processed info, while our info was direct. And our relations with Erdogan's military groups were direct too. We conveyed Putin's message to them that Erdogan should apologise, and that after that, we would start cooperating with them in many areas including geopolitics and Syria. After Erdogan apologised I came to Turkey and I took part in a press conference where I said that there was going to be a reaction from the pro-Western Atlanticist network in Turkey, that the Gülenists would try to do something against it, something very serious. This press conference aired live on the most popular media and I wasn't prepared. I was speaking openly, and I didn't expect it to be aired live. Though I repeated the same thing the next day. I was invited by Ankara's mayor. We talked about geopolitics, the Gülenists, the deep state, which is a

patriotic military group, and the parallel state, which was created by the liberal globalists through the Gülenists. So there is a very important politological difference. I wanted to return to Russia, but then there was the coup d'état which happened only three or four hours after the broadcast where I tried to inform the Turkish people about the possibility of a coup d'état. Later I was in the airport and it was surrounded by putschists. I was in touch with some Russian friends and they asked me whether I could see people in uniform and advised me where I could hide. Erdogan was in Antalya, but they didn't know if he would come to Ankara or Istanbul. He came to Istanbul and was surrounded there. I tried to transmit to Moscow what we knew about the coup d'état and explain what was going on and who in my opinion was the bad guy and why we should support Erdogan immediately. To me, it was a CIA plot. And this was confirmed by the Turks later. One hour later the putschists came to the mayor's office where I had been before I went to the airport. There was a chance I would be killed or arrested because I was in the centre of attention in Turkish society and I had warned them about the possibility of a coup d'état, the reason for and the result of Erdogan's excuse. The reaction came hours later, when the popular defence of Erdogan started and so on. The role of the former military opposition to Erdogan was very important. They considered the putsch as the reaction of the Atlanticists and supported Erdogan in spite of being held in prison for many years. That was an interesting reaction from some parts of Turkish society. So, I played a big role in the shadow relations by giving interviews and making publications and books in Turkey. My book *Foundations of Geopolitics* was translated and published in Turkey in 2000. It was carefully studied by all military academies and institutions. Pushkin, Putin, and Dugin are well-known names in Turkey. No one in Russia cares about Turkey, maybe only in terms of tourism or business, but intellectually, culturally, geopolitically, nobody cares. Most Russian patriots don't like Turkey. I was the only one who was open to dialogue. And so I was considered as a broker between two cultures in defence of traditional identity. I was well received there and very well known, and was there during the putsch, trying to get support from Moscow for Erdogan immediately. And I stayed there and waiting for them to come after me, as everybody knew I was in the airport. My flight was delayed and air traffic was closed by the putschists who said that they would hit any plane in the sky. However, after five or six very special hours I was able to fly to Moscow, as someone allowed the plane to go. The other planes were delayed for days; no one could leave Turkey except this plane to Moscow. So I got back to my philosophical activity explaining everything I witnessed and all the events I participated in to the people in patriotic Russian circles. That was more or less the story. Later I made a film on Tsargrad TV channel about the coup in Turkey. It was translated into Turkish. This film was considered to be one of the most relevant films produced, compared to the purely propagandistic films. A lot of people watched it. And the next year I went to the

parliament of Turkey to meet the prime minister. I was welcomed with honour because my role was well-known in Turkey due to that situation. There were other channels as well, but mine was based on geopolitics and independent relations and so not biased. I worked for Russian national geopolitical interests and this was appreciated. Two years later I was invited to Istanbul State University to participate in a commemoration of the coup d'état. I gave a speech on the differences between coups, one made by the parallel state and the previous ones which were made by the deep state. I explained the shift between Kemalist and pre-Kemalist identities, and the Neo-Ottoman identity that was common to both Erdogan and Gülen. But, Gülen was in favour of the Atlanticist exterior globalist centre in my view. Erdogan tried to do the same based on Turkish identity. I described Gülen as Erdogan's shadow. I suggested to Erdogan to develop a new vision of Turkey's future. That speech was also well received because it was friendly towards the Turks and with a philosophical and geopolitical understanding of their identity. My relations with Turkey are good because they are based on philosophical considerations of identities and geopolitical interests and relations put in the context of the new changes in geopolitics. When I was in Amsterdam with Bernard-Henri Lévy, he said that there are emerging empires that endanger the new globalist liberal world order. In his view, the Turkish Empire is a threat to the West and humanity, as well as Iran, Russia, and China. The reemergence of these four traditional empires from the pre-Colombian period has an ideological advocate, and that is Dugin — he pointed at me. Here, in Amsterdam, in the middle of the free liberal world, a representative, an intellectual advocate of the reemergence of these empires and someone who promotes the most dangerous idea that they should work together in a multipolar way, and not against each other, as was the case in history. That's a more dangerous challenge to us, said Lévy. And I agree, because it is based on the same appreciation of a balance of power, but we are on the opposite side of the chess board, as I said many times in my conversation with Brzezinski. I asked Brzezinski if he considered chess to be a two-person game. He didn't agree. 'For me, it's just one chess board that you turn and play from different sides', he said. But, little-by-little, the figure of the second player (in theory Dugin, in politics Putin, Erdogan, or Xi Jinping) appears. There may be others, for example, Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi or Al-Qaeda, but they are false players because they have no geopolitical tools and are created by the unipolar world in order to have an artificial opposition, but in reality are fully controlled, in my opinion. However, real players are slowly coming to the chessboard. And so it is not just Brzezinski playing, there are other players with nuclear weapons or decisions who can foil his wishes, and say, 'stop, it's our turn to make a move'. Brzezinski may have died of old age, or maybe he is dead because of thinking that the chessboard can't turn anymore. And so that's the context of relations with Turkey. To create multipolarity, we should not concentrate only on our own narrow national interests as Russians, we need to take into account the other

players too and let them make a move on the board. It was Putin's decision to tolerate Turks in the north of Syria. It wasn't in our national interests, but it was necessary to make a deal with them, and it is the same with Iran. On a practical level, Putin follows the same logic, the same geopolitical structure. In Shanghai I met a Chinese philosopher, Dr. Fang. He knows Russia well; he even met Putin. At the Valdai Discussion Club, he asked him what was the philosophical basis on which he made his decisions. Putin said that it is not based on ideology anymore, but on geopolitical calculations. And geopolitics in Russia follows my book because I'm the founder of the modern Russian version of geopolitics. Since the late 1980s I began promoting Eurasianism and mirroring the Anglo-Saxon traditions and accepting the active role of Eurasia, which is considered by Anglo-Saxons and Atlanticists as an object, not a subject. All Russian geopolitics is transformed by turning the object of geopolitics into the subject of geopolitics and playing the game against the global world in order to establish multipolarity. But to do that we can't exist in a bipolar world. We are a subject but not the whole thing, only a part of the subject. We need another subject to play with us on our side with freedom of movement. It's better that they play on our side, and maybe have some freedom to move their pieces. And that's my relationship towards Turkey.

N: Three follow up questions. During these tumultuous events in Turkey, were you acting officially, semi-officially, or in a private capacity? And also, you mentioned to me earlier that you played a similar sort of role in South Ossetia. Can you talk about that as well? In this situation, were you acting officially, semi-officially or privately?

D: The Kremlin is not a consolidated reality. It wasn't official. But what is the role of Kissinger after quitting his position in the White House? He was very active without any working title for the benefit of the US. The same with Bernard Lévy, who was Sarkozy's adviser; he acted before and after Sarkozy's presidency trying to do the same thing. So, there's no special title for what we do. It's an intellectual engagement based on the ideas, will, vision, values and some special type of analysis, which I defend. My thoughts are considered to be relevant by a certain sector of the Russian deep state, which I was in touch with during the Turkish coup. It's a patriotic group of isolated people around Putin.

N: Who are these people?

D: I can't name them. They are different. They may be competing with each other for power inside the establishment. I take that into consideration. I don't take sides. I have a special position inside Russian politics that is unofficial. I can't say the names because our relations are based on common interests but everyone has his/her own positions. They have to balance all the words they say. Finally, we don't know these people. I'm sure the majority of these names won't mean a thing to you because they are too official. They can't let themselves express their own opinions as they are responsible for other officials. But they are more free to act than to speak. It's different for me. I have no tools

to act but I'm free to speak. If you speak freely, you can't act. If you think, speak and act, you are Putin, and not Dugin, nor some shadow general, nor a person from the secret services, nor any other official advisor of Putin. If you are an official advisor to Putin, you have to keep your mouth shut because Putin's advisors' words can be interpreted as Putin's words. And that may be confusing. That's why you should keep silent. You meet Putin once a year and whisper something to him. That's a rule of the establishment. If you have an official position, you can't say anything. It's acceptable only for a press secretary to speak. Even Putin said that Peskov says stupid things. I've kept in touch with people who control the geopolitical situation in Syria and Turkey. Our relations are based on their understanding. They consider me as a source of information or analysis. They listen to me not because they follow my ideas, but because they think that it's a valuable and precious source of information or analysis. It's based on fulfilling their functions and roles in the establishment. Sometimes my vision is valid or critically important — it depends. These people come and go. The establishment is something different from the intellectual or science fields. To think a single thought takes years, it demands different cycles than the establishment cycles that are much shorter…

N: When did you first establish these contacts?

D: They were from Yeltsin's time. The deep state existed from the very beginning of Yeltsin's time. I had different relations with them for thirty years. Now almost nobody from that period remains, but we had constant relations for thirty years. In Yeltsin's time, with no access to media and few published texts, I had some good relations with people in power, in the military sector, secret services sector, who felt that there was something wrong with the establishment and Yeltsin's ideology. They tried to understand what was going on. I started giving lectures at the Military Academy of the General Staff of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation in 1992. I brought many thinkers there. I've kept in touch with people who influence the situation. But it's not that important for me because ideas matter to me. My own will to do things is an action as well, a metaphysical, philosophical action. From time to time it coincides with the concrete line of politics.

N: And are there times when you can see direct links between what you say to a certain official in the shadows and then a concrete policy or action that follows afterwards?

D: Yes, that happens sometimes. But I have no control. Despite all my efforts, I can't get anywhere. I always push my vision but I don't control when it is implemented and how it is used. For thirty years I've been trying to implement my developing vision. This time I'll try to achieve a more practical solution. It's casual. You can apply a small effort and receive a great result or a big effort can lead to nothing. I can't control Russian politics, but I can influence it. But it's not a focused influence, it's a general influence. Sometimes texts, articles, speeches are more effective. Sometimes the most

important decisions are made by people I don't know, who were informed casually, for example, or they read my texts. I want to expand in the field of ideas, and I don't concentrate on the channels required to put them into practice — that's improvisation or chance…

N: Perhaps you could give a list of examples of when your ideas, either from your written work or your direct efforts, have been carried out in practice or have gone on to directly influence specific events or people.

D: The creation of the Eurasian Union; I had developed this concept in the 1990s. Geopolitical opposition to unipolarity and the concept of unipolarity were introduced by me as well as all geopolitics. I introduced the principles of Russian geopolitics and now this discipline is studied in all universities. This was introduced by me. Later it was taken, plagiarised, repeated, developed, but the core of geopolitics was introduced by me. When Putin says to Mr. Fang that he acts on the basis of geopolitics that means his actions are based on my ideas, because there is no other geopolitics in Russia. It's impossible to not have Eurasian geopolitics in Russia. Then, in the early 1990s, I said that Ukraine can't exist in such a state, and that sooner or later it would split, and Crimea and the eastern part would be reshaped or become independent political bodies or a part of Russia. That's what happened. I promoted our relations and alliance with Iran and Turkey. It's not a return to Soviet politics; it's something new and I outlined this alliance on a geopolitical level many years before it took shape in Syria. I introduced the theory of multipolarity, which is now accepted as Lavrov's official position. I sent him my book *The Theory of a Multipolar World*, and received a letter of total agreement from him on this. To promote multipolarity, you should have the idea of multipolarity, which I elaborated many years ago. So my theory is a part of the Russian position. I advocated the context of Russia allying with conservatives, including far-right and far-left movements, considering that the far-left movement was a part of Soviet politics. I didn't insist too much because it was traditional for Russian politics. I'm not a strong or radical leftist; I don't like materialism or dogmatism. I try to concentrate on my relations with right-wing populist movements and now it is a part of Putin's politics. He meets Salvini, Le Pen and so on. I was in favour of Trump because he is a transitional figure of populism, a kind of challenge to the globalist coherence of liberal hegemony. In my opinion, he would disturb American politics and destabilise it. That's what Putin thinks as well. The majority of the Russian establishment was against Trump. Putin was in favour of him…

N: Just because he provides an element of chaos in America?

D: No, if Trump saves America, I'll applaud him. But it's difficult. Still, he'll change the situation for better or worse in America, but for us better in either case. That was my analysis that turned out to be right and the hatred of Bernard-Henri Lévy towards Trump proves it.

N: How far did this Russian support for Trump extend? Were active measures and cyber-interventions part of it? Or, in your opinion, are these hacking accusations just fake news and part of a false flag operation of the West?

D: There might have been some isolated cases trying to…

N: But not coordinated from the Kremlin?

D: Not so much. The Kremlin coordinated support for Hillary Clinton with the Russian oligarchs. Everybody in the establishment was sure that Clinton would win, so Putin gave permission to the oligarchs to finance her. This revelation will come out at some stage. It was already mentioned during Putin's meeting with Trump. Putin sort of apologised for the Russian support of Clinton. That's what Trump says and what I said in interviews after Trump's election. Putin explained he was in favour of Trump, but we didn't intervene too much.

N: So you admit there was Russian intervention?

D: We tried to intervene by supporting Clinton. But look, we couldn't even prohibit the Telegram app after the state officially declared that it would stop Telegram's activity in Russia. Our capacities to intervene in the cyber sphere are very limited. They are overestimated by inner political interests in the West. Russia serves to undermine Trump's position, and that is an inner cause. If we were effective, we would have stopped Telegram in one week. But I'm still using it after three months of its prohibition in Russia. That shows what we can and cannot do. That shows the limits of Russia's cyber capabilities. I suggested that we should openly help Trump but I wasn't listened to.

N: That is perhaps one of your main limitations, you don't know how to consistently ensure that your ideas are the driving force behind the decisions of people in power. You can only provide a fleeting (but sometimes powerful) form of influence.

D: Maybe. For example, I suggested we liberate Eastern Ukraine and give them the freedom to choose their own fate, and not annex them. I insisted on that, but to no effect. In the case of Trump I was rather blamed by pro-Western liberals for supporting some populist movement in the West. I'm blamed in Russia and sometimes I am heard by Putin. But I will never know when exactly. Russia is a very complicated system. I have no reason to say that we had any possibilities to intervene in favour of Trump and that we have any serious capacities to do so. We have hackers, patriotic hackers or anti-globalist hackers. The CIA infiltrated an agent, Sergei Mikhailov, into the FSB who blocked this anti-globalist activity for many years. Mikhailov is a recognised American agent. Before Trump's election he was arrested and so Russian patriotic hackers weren't under American control anymore. This time Brzezinski's chess game was stopped by the arrest of a central figure. Sergei Mikhailov had a key position. Now it is clear that he stopped Russian hackers' activities and acted on behalf of the CIA. This case is confirmed. We can't exclude that Russian patriotic hackers…

N: Acted unofficially…

D: Absolutely. Freedom in Russia is bigger than we think. The West has the wrong picture of Putin deciding everything. Putin makes the most important decisions but liberals around him don't care about his decisions; they stick to their own way; the deep state, so to say. They are loyal personally; they support patriotic decisions, but implement them with less eagerness. Eagerness means a lot in the case of the Russian mentality; we are special. With passion we can do a lot. If you agree with Putin's order, you'll be very active and inventive. You'll find ways to implement it without asking Putin. If you are a liberal or a CIA agent, you will imitate support; you'll make it look like you're doing something. You might hire a hacker and later reveal it to America that you fulfilled Putin's order with a scandal and no effect. Everything is possible in Russia. There is no one line, no ideology. Everybody wants to influence the situation. My line of influence is clear. Maybe it was linked to my will to support Trump, but I doubt that. I can't confirm that. When they copy my texts, they copy the errors too. That's a kind of mark. Many of my ideas are marked. There is a trick in espionage where they put one hair over a door and if someone comes in, the hair gets broken. It is a kind of invisible mark. They also mark bribery money. So I do the same and I know that this time it wasn't me who influenced it. I tried to convince them that we should intervene because they (the US) had intervened and it would be very logical to respond. They try to support Navalny, so we should support Trump or some US fifth column. They didn't listen to me. They were in favour of Clinton, who was more reasonable and had more links with our nuclear energy. So we could've made a deal without such radical experiments as with Trump. Anyway, they rejected my idea, but it worked in the end. But in Russia you never know when something works or doesn't work. Many people share my opinion not because it's mine, but because it correlates to their vision. In the early 1990s I rarely came across people who had the same opinion. Later, after thirty years of my work, with different changes in Russia, with globalisation, the Westernisation of society, the failure of liberalism in Russia openly recognised by everyone, these kind of ideas are everywhere in Russia. So, anyone could suggest hacking Podesta's email. It's not unique; it's a logical conclusion.

N: Let's move on to the Salisbury Novichok poisoning case, a story which just keeps developing. It seems that four months after this initial incident a couple in Amesbury, which is seven miles away from Salisbury, were also poisoned by the same nerve agent after they picked up a discarded perfume bottle. The woman died shortly afterwards. What are your thoughts on these developments? Your position last time was that the whole thing was a set-up by the British establishment, but do you really think they would kill a British citizen in the process?

D: Absolutely, that's quite possible because there are double standards in the spy world. If you are a spy, you should be ready to be killed by one side or the other.

N: But she wasn't a spy, she was just an ordinary civilian.

D: We need to study the case, first of all. But I'm sure that in this case it couldn't have been done without Putin's decision. We can control hackers or political engagement without Putin, but everything that is connected with spies is under Putin's direct control because he was a spy. The world of spies is the most important thing for him. Dealing with spies is a special field where there are some rules, laws, norms of exchange and balance of one spy against another. I don't know this sphere at all. It's impossible that Putin would give an order to kill a spy before the World Cup. I'm sure that it was impossible for someone on a high level to give an order to kill. It's impossible because I know the rules of the establishment. It's not in the realm of possible. It's morally impossible. There is an analysis that suggests that it could've been a globalist operation against England and the West. It could've been an inside secret services conflict. It could have an Israeli trace. There should be another explanation rather than a link to Russia. I'm not a specialist in spies, poisons, or chemical weapons. But I've watched English films about spies with Novichok involved. For example, Novichok appeared in this series… I don't remember the name, but there was a crazy savage who wanted to kill humanity and British agents needed to stop him. This was shown three months before the Skripal incident. We live in post-modernity where something that happens in a film is a kind of foreshadowing of what will happen in reality. Film and reality have exchanged places. So, I have no proof that we didn't do it, but I think this Skripal incident is staged.

N: If you reject Putin's direct involvement, then it could have been someone else in Russia with the motive I put to you last time (which you didn't really address). It could have been someone in the Russian deep state who didn't like Putin and wanted to discredit him. So, they carried out this operation in the hope that it would bring forth chaos and embarrassment for him just before the World Cup and the presidential election crucially. The British government may play all sorts of games and tricks in the shadowy world of espionage, but I'm not sure they would countenance the death of an innocent British civilian, who wasn't a spy at all, for such purposes as this. However, I admit it's a very puzzling case. And, Sergei Skripal, the prime target, seems to have escaped largely unscathed.

D: That's not so important to me. If we had had Skripal's daughter here, we could have shed a light on the situation, including on how this English couple was poisoned. We need to cooperate and not accuse each other. If there are any connections, I'm sure they aren't with Putin or any of his officials. But some foreign spy may be involved inside the situation in Russia. I don't affirm that it is staged by May or Johnson. It's not Putin. But who? We should investigate together who's behind it. Putin is interested in finding the truth because he knows it wasn't him. Putin knows almost everything in the world of spies. That's the topic of his special attention. He has access to a huge source

of information and personal experience. He knows how it works and has an opportunity to change how it works. He is organically interested in finding the truth. He cannot be guilty. He's not using this case for political propaganda. In this case, the truth is more important than anything else. Maybe it was an attempt by Skripal to kill himself. We need to accept it as a challenge, something extraordinary, and very evil. And we need to prevent such things from happening in the future. We need to cooperate to do that. Because a Russian citizen and ex-spy was involved. His daughter was involved. A British citizen was killed. We are affected by that. We propose to cooperate in exchanging information to clarify the case.

N: And do you see any connection at all between this case and the Litvinenko case in 2006 where a former Russian spy was fatally poisoned in the UK by polonium-210?

D: That time it was something different. Though I'm not an expert, I know the rules of geopolitics and the Russian establishment. But I don't know the rules of how they deal with spies. Russians always respects the rules, but I don't know them. Specialists say they were not so vehement in Litvinenko's case, but they are vehement in denying any relations with Skripal.

N: But not so much for Litvinenko…

D: They're not excusing it. It is possible that his case leads back to us. Our intervention is impossible. I don't think we did it. I don't know. Experts say that the two cases are totally different. That doesn't mean that we poisoned Litvinenko. There might have been a double play in the Litvinenko case in Russia. In the case of Litvinenko everything is possible because it relies on the expert opinion that I have. I know Andrey Lugovoy personally…

N: Have you spoken to him about it?

D: Not particularly. He didn't say anything.

N: Do you think he could do something like this?

D: No, not him. There is something behind Litvinenko's death and it is not Lugovoy. But I could be wrong; I'm not an expert. The Litvinenko case was one thing with a complex of possibilities, but the Skripal case is quite different. If the first case is possible, the second is impossible. Putin would prevent anything like that in any situation, in any aspect of his network.

N: One could also put the argument that incidents like this, which cause the West to react, are important building blocks in sustaining the Kremlin's fortress mentality as they show that the West is attacking Russia again with hostile rhetoric, expulsions of diplomats, sanctions and so there is a necessity to unite behind a strong leader like Putin. No doubt this could be useful in an election year.

D: He doesn't need that. He was sure of the election victory not because of our love for him but because we accept him generally. Even people who don't like him would have voted for him. His popularity will fall but he was sure of the good results of the

elections. So, this didn't affect it at all because everybody already knows that Russia is under attack. This demonisation of Putin serves him. Hatred of the West supports him. More sanctions mean more pressure on Putin and so more people like him, even those who wouldn't normally like him. If there wasn't such a comparison between the LGBT+, AI, robotic, Russophobic obsessed West and Putin, Putin wouldn't look so good in our eyes. We think that he is one of us standing up against all of this. So, the West is the most important part of the legitimisation of Putin. Good relations with the West would kill him, except in the case of Trump.

N: And why is that?

D: Because the West thinks that Trump is created by Putin. If Clinton came to make friends with Putin, he would probably accept that. And that would be the end. But now everything is in favour of Putin. It's too late now. Trump isn't the right figure to discredit. The West lies that Putin has something to do with Trump's election. For us it's perfect. It's not Putin's efforts. The West has done everything to keep him in power. The Skripal case didn't change anything. It's negative internationally, internally it's neutral. Everyone was prepared to be accused of something. Nobody cared about the accusations and it was turned against the West. That's not the result Putin wanted; he tries to normalise relations, he didn't have any reason to do that. We pay too much attention to it. It's not so important. Russia is eager to investigate the case with Britain. I wrote a few articles about our friendship with Britain after Brexit. I thought that it was a very big historical cycle for England. For the first time the UK has no rational argument to be against Russia, only an historical one. It was the same with Turkey. When they realised that they now have no reason to be against Russia, they tried to change their politics. Something similar could happen to UK-Russian relations. That was just before the Skripal case, and I made some statements. Some of them haven't appeared yet. I was obliged to change tack in such a situation. When you have an event such as this, it could turn in two ways: either benefit you or radically go against you. So, I was invited to London before the Skripal incident took place, but I came after it happened. And I wasn't able to speak normally in that situation, there was only an exchange of accusations. It was a pity because I planned this trip to London to promote new possible solutions for UK-Russia relations.

N: And what are these possible solutions?

D: The Skripal case happened exactly when there was an opportunity for good relations between the UK and Russia. The same thing happened with the Russian plane in Syria. Erdogan and Putin decided that Russia would tolerate a Turkish presence in Northern Syria. At that moment the plane crashed and the pilot was killed. It happened in order not to hinder those relations.

N: But even without the Skripal case, it's perhaps too early for the UK to start thinking about matters like this because we haven't even 'Brexited' yet. Navel gazing is

the primary focus of the government at the moment.

D: Maybe it's too early but I think that the Skripal case was a step to prevent that, to delay that in the future. It's a little strange to speak about that now. I think that the UK was Russia's enemy in the Great Game — the fight for India, Central Asia, the Caucasus. That belongs to the past. Then it was a part of its role in the American Empire. But the Americans don't need Britain so much anymore. The UK tried to destroy the EU from the inside, working against the French-German alliance, which wanted to promote the independence of Europe from the Anglo-Saxon pole. But that's not the case after Brexit. So the UK has no reason at all to be an enemy of Russia now.

N: What about the UK's role in NATO?

D: NATO will collapse soon. It's not that important. Britain is not as big a fan of NATO as they used to be.

N: Maybe, but it's difficult to imagine that even today's British government would want to lose the American defence commitments entailed in NATO's Article 5 — as some British diplomats like to say, if we throw these US defence commitments away we'll never get them back again. And this consistent British line of thinking seems unlikely to change in the face of Brexit. In fact, one could argue that leaving the EU would cause the UK to double down on its role in NATO in order to prove its relevance internationally and to the US in particular.

D: Yes, but I consider the step out of Europe as a chance for the UK to reposition itself on the global stage; that is, to find a new solution for the Commonwealth, to cooperate with Russia in the Middle East or independently, and to be independent from the Americans and Europe. You are very intelligent. You know what is going on in the Muslim world on a deep level. You understand it better than the Americans. You understand why US plans are doomed. The UK's intellectual power inherited from its former empire could be used in a positive way to promote multipolarity and help it find its own place in the multipolar world.

N: What place would that be?

D: It's up to you to decide. You have no place at all now. You should come up with something.

Later on that day we took a walk in the forest. The playful dance between the shadows and golden light drove me towards a particular line of questioning.

N: There is an Italian filmmaker called Marco Bellocchio who in his film *La Condanna* posited the idea that motionless beauty is safe and accepted by society, but beauty when it is in motion is too dangerous and so is condemned by society. Do you agree with this idea? And how would you personally define beauty?

D: I think that beauty is the most enigmatic form of being. For example, Plato precisely said that there is no proper criteria, no mathematical criteria for beauty. There is a kind of secret to beauty. You see something that is really beautiful with no explanation at all. So I think that beauty is something that is not only unexplainable but something that doesn't expand the desire to explain. It is something evident, your inspiration stops, you are struck by beauty. I think that beauty is incompatible with the concept of explanation or ownership. It should be contemplated, valued, and observed at a distance. If you approach too close to beauty, this image disappears. So, I think that beauty is to be observed at a distance; it is something unexplainable which doesn't inspire the desire to posses, it is something that overwhelms you.

N: No doubt. But, do you also agree with Bellocchio's idea?

D: Yes, I agree. But I would prefer to say that beauty is something that is not only dangerous; if you concentrate too much on it you risk losing your mind because it is something that is absolutely irrational. Rationality is completely against its nature. So, if you want to posses something beautiful, it's not beautiful at all. Beauty inspires all. It's dangerous, I agree, but motionless or moving I don't see a big difference. For example, when a beautiful horse is running or when it is standing it's the same, but it should be always at a distance.

N: The example Bellocchio gives in his film is a protagonist who sees a statue — I think it was the Rape of Proserpina — and admires it, something which is fine and accepted by society. But the protagonist then tries to play out the statue's act with a real woman and he is arrested for it as this is considered to be far too dangerous for society. So, his idea is that this motionless act in a beautiful statue is acceptable, but it is forbidden to put it in motion in real life.

D: Yes, but a statue is not a picture of real life; a statue is art. It is an archetype; it is much more than a reflection of real life. I think that art is precisely a kind of paradigm of reality. Art is dangerous in itself. And I think it's a little bit naive to put art into real life or return the image of art to nature because it belongs on a different level. And what is dangerous, I agree, is to confuse them. We should respect art as art, beauty as beauty, something rational as rational. A statue and a woman belong to different levels of reality and we need to respect both. And the difference between them is existential, not only formal. It's not something living or not living. A statue can be living as well in a special way.

N: How can a statue be living in a special way?

D: Because beauty is something lovely, something living existentially. And a woman can be a simulacrum of a statue; she can appear totally dead whilst being alive. So, the relations between a dead object and living object are not so easy. That is the history of Galatea. Sometimes the statue can be more alive than a woman and a real, beautiful

woman can be absolutely dead whilst being alive. For example, there is a problem of the voice I think. Because the voice of a woman can betray her beauty.

N: Silence is a virtue…

D: Yes, to be silent is to be more like a statue. And likewise, not always but quite often, the voice can save the beauty of a woman. I think there is not only the look but all the other forms of life. And finally there is the idea of something that is really beautiful. The beauty of an idea could be reflected in a statue, in poetry, in a philosophical concept or notion or in a real object; for example, a living man or woman or in an animal or in a tree. A beautiful idea is the most dangerous type of idea. A beautiful idea is not only seductive but revolutionary as well, and sometimes subversive because it is imposing a beautiful idea against the rules, and against logic. It imposes itself as such. And in that sense a false idea is sometimes more beautiful and more useful than a right one. So, by seducing it imposes itself and strikes you, and a beautiful idea doesn't demand explanation or the context of realisation. That's the secret of beauty, it's something revolutionary, I think. Very dangerous, I agree with that. But in that sense to be a statue in motion or motionless or a living being — all of that is a secondary confrontation with beauty itself and the idea of beauty.

We drift deeper into the impenetrable forest.

N: Do you know where we are going, Alexander? Because I'm following you.

D: Yes, we are going to the cemetery where there is a chapel dedicated to Christ's descent into hell. The chapel existed long before, in the times of the first monastery. After that it was destroyed. And it was not restored, but built anew. But it is interesting that the name of Christ's descent into hell was given by the *starets*,[16] the first elder. It is unique in history when this name was given to the chapel.

N: Where do you think this ancient fascination with death comes from? I don't think it is a purely Russian phenomenon as I have noticed that other countries such as Lithuania also have a similar interest in cemeteries and the dead.

D: I think it is an Eastern European tradition, but not for Estonians because they are Finno–Ugric. But Baltic people are very close to us. There was a Balto-Slavic unity in ancient times and Slavic people and Baltic people were fascinated by death and the return of the dead. And this is a kind of common denominator for Eastern European culture. It was inherited from the Dacians. And maybe the Dacian Balto-Slavic people and the Serbs, Bulgarians and other Balkan peoples received it from the Pre–Indo-European population. The Polish as well are obsessed by the dead and by their return. And the most important Polish writer Adam Mickiewicz has written a poem called 'Dziady' or 'Forefather's Eve', which is precisely about the return of death. The Slavic

word for 'Vampire' or *Upir* in Russian is someone who returns from the dead and kills the living. And it is a tradition common to Eastern European culture…

N: I thought it came from the Balkans, especially Romania or perhaps even from Turkey?

D: No, not from Turkey…

N: But, Byron's famous Turkish tale 'The Giaour' specifically references vampires and vampirism.

D: At that time Turkey was Greece, and the Greeks took it from the Slavs. It is not originally Greek; it is a Slavic idea. The Greek term was taken by the Turks in the Ottoman period. But all that was Dacian in the Romanic, Slavic and Baltic region. It's something special to Eastern Europe which I've investigated in two volumes of *Noomakhia*, which are dedicated to Eastern Europe. And concerning this temple, Starets Sophrony thought that the Church should represent hell with a red floor, red carpets, the brown colours are the earth around and only blue sky overhead — that is, heaven. So you are in hell but you should try to come out. And that was the concept of the temple, according to him, and Olga was to repeat this concept here because it is the descent of Christ into hell. Here it is much more logical to use this symbolism, which was precisely the symbolism of the temple that was constructed by Sophroni Saharov in Mount Athos, where the name was different, but the concept was this.

N: We have talked a lot about death during this and previous conversations. But, we haven't touched upon the curious link between love and death which you find in literature, philosophy and religion. For example, Shakespeare showed the tragic romantic link in *Romeo and Juliet* and Pushkin did the same in *Evgeny Onegin*. While Plato, in his *Symposium*, talks about the more abstract philosophical dimensions of the link. And then you have the Christian transcendental idea that Christ died out of love for us, so that we might inherit eternal life. What are your thoughts on this link between love and death?

D: I think that death is precisely the most important thing of all beings. Death is not only opposite to life, but it is as well another form of life. Death is a kind of border of life. And being the border, it is not only a separation, but that which unites man in its historical being with something that transcends him. And love is the other way of relating to what transcends us. So, death and love are two poles of the same border, the border of our existence, of our existential present. When we see death, we stress something that separates us, when we see love, we stress something that unites us with the other in the transcendent dimension. And I think that there is a kind of impulse of life in front of death. The intellectual being in this impulse of life is reflected in thought. Real thought that has a right to be called thought is possible in front of death. And love maybe tries to diminish the tension with thought. Love is a real alternative to thought. When we love something we don't think.

N: It sounds like you are talking about the lover's madness which Socrates discusses in Plato's *Phaedrus*. However, there are also the more stable and noble types of love like platonic love and divine love and these can often be conducive to thought.

D: Yes, but all of them I think are more emotional, including love of wisdom, which is philosophy. You love wisdom and wisdom, in that sense, transcends you. When thought comes there is no love. So I think there is a great opposition between thought and love, not between love and death. And death is the way to provoke very strong and powerful thought — real thought, radical thought. And love is the way to make it smoother. Love is compatible with smooth thought, death with sharp thought. So, in my vision, death is more important than love.

N: What about romantic love like in *Romeo and Juliet*, which leads to death?

D: The most interesting thing in romantic love is that it ends in death. The most important thing is death, in any sense. If love leads to the death, that's nice.

N: Some people might say that is rather morbid. Is this successful love, in your opinion?

D: There is no such kind of love as successful love. One French author has said that happy love has no history. There is no such thing as happy love. It is not love. Love is dramatic. Love is tragic. As such it is positive. But death is the result of love. So, death is much more important than love. And good love is the love that leads to death. I think we need to reconsider death. Death is the central and absolute thing of our existence. And love is a kind of addition to that. What is important in Christ? His relationship to death. By his death, he destroyed the other death. But there are two aspects of death. Always it is death in Christ that is important. And the relation to death that is our life, that is our resurrection. To say the truth, I think that there is a kind of overestimation of love in modern culture. Love is secondary, death is central. And when we say love, we think that this is something that can save us from death. No, love is something that leads us to death.

N: But, Christ's death was out of love. He died to liberate us from sin and death and in their place bring redemption, heaven and eternal life with Him.

D: Yes, I agree. But, what is most important is his death. I would like to stress that in our culture we underestimate death and overestimate love. Let's change that. Let's consider love as something important, but death as something central. Let us concentrate on death, death as such, death in any sense, in any aspect. And in doing so, we could maybe solve the mystery of life, but not otherwise.

After a fortifying lunch we returned to a familiar geopolitical topic.

N: In your multipolar world, what role would Britain play? And what would its relations with Russia be like?

D: The most important thing is for Britain to accept the paradigm of multipolarity because everything else depends on that. If they accept that and recognise that the traditional British dream of unipolarity is over and not possible anymore, then they can accept multipolarity as something inevitable or something that is rather irreversible, I would say. So, in that case, England would concentrate its brilliant intellectual capacity on imagining its role in a multipolar world. This would be a great revolutionary breakthrough because the tradition of Britain is to affirm unipolarity and to create a unipolar world either by itself or with America or the West in general or with NATO. So, British mentality is unipolar and to change it into multipolar is not easy.

N: Britain would need to be convinced not just with abstract geopolitical theories but by practical arguments showing the tangible benefits of such a course of action.

D: History will convince you with the full implementation of Brexit.

N: If it happens that is — they seem to be dragging their feet on it these days.

D: But it will happen, I think, sooner or later. And when it happens I think the British will rearrange their intellectual, political, social and economic efforts in order not to defend the old, but to enter into the new, into multipolarity. And after that England will discover how many options it has. Because if you try to defend the old against the new you don't think about the alternatives, you try to concentrate on the defence of what this is or what it is likely to be. But if you accept the inevitable, irreversible change of paradigm, you will be obliged to find your own way in that concept. And I see Britain as an independent pole of the West. There are different possibilities; for example, Europe as it is currently composed could collapse because we know only a French–German Europe. But there is a third Europe composed of the Dutch, Lorraine, Switzerland and Northern Italy — this is the third heritage of the sons of Charlemagne. And this third heritage…

N: Even so the founders of the EU claimed they were following on from Charlemagne's legacy and indeed its first members were not only France and Germany, but also Italy, Belgium, Netherlands and Luxembourg.

D: But, it is the wrong European Union. It is based on the two poles of France and Germany and they ignore Switzerland's ability to harmonise these two poles. There is an unharmonised example of German descended relations, which is England, and then there is a harmonised example, which is Switzerland. The present conflicted EU also represents the unharmonised example, but there is the possibility for a completely different EU. In order to arrive at it, the current construction should be destroyed and something new should be created. In that situation, England could be a very important player. But, in order to arrive at it, you need to change the attitude here, historically.

N: In your view, what would a new European Union look like?

D: It should be based on a reaffirmation of European identity. It should not be generally Western or liberal or globalist; it should be a European Europe. Brexit is a

sign of stepping into English England, at least in theory, because it's a kind of step out of a non–European Europe, a Europe without identity. In order to save British identity out of the European melting pot, Britain has made this very important step. After Brexit, the UK could follow up with the reconstruction of the EU based on the reaffirmation of this European identity with its traditional Christian and Greco–Roman culture. That is a return to its roots, or a return to the Renaissance where the wrong decision to go in the direction of modernity was made. Second, Britain could recreate the world of the English Commonwealth, a Commonwealth that is more and more multipolar as the other former colonies are clearly choosing multipolarity. The current role of Britain is to prevent that and to reposition them in the Western camp. But, if there isn't a Western camp as something united, England can play a special role supporting their claims for multipolarity while helping their former colonies — the Commonwealth countries — to create a completely new civilisation, united by the English language, for example, and English history. And to rethink the colonial period and find the wrong side of it that was evident, and to try to find the positive side. For example, there were two generations of specialists on India in the colonial period. The first generation considered Indian culture to be very rich in civilisation; they were absolutely fascinated by it, they tried to study it, and were great admirers of it. And there was a second generation of colonial thinkers who tried to exploit the new totalitarian spirit by blaming Indian culture for being savage and so on. I think you should blame the second generation, and finally bring all of them to trial. But the first generation of English orientalists dealing with India were brilliant and are an example for you of multipolar thinking. So, you discovered a great ancient civilisation and were admirers of it. You started to study it, including, maybe, helping to restore their ancient principles and to conserve them. So, that is completely different. I think the UK had the same relations with some African countries and Australia. For example, they identified the Aborigines as a kind of animal, and that was bad. But if you rediscover that Aboriginal culture is small, very special and is a kind of a treasure of humanity, then you can start a real dialogue with them, trying to understand them, and trying to help them sincerely. I think that would be a completely new shift. And that is how we could work together for example, reshaping the Islamic world, as you know it very, very well. I think that this knowledge of the Islamic world is very important in English society as well as for Western multipolarity. I know some English specialists in Islam and they are the best I know. Some of them have changed their identity, and they have become almost Sufi, Shia and traditionalists. It's quite possible that the traditionalist identity of England was not actualised. I think for example that Prince Charles is a good figure. He visited Mount Athos, studied Sufi culture and is promoting the traditional way of life. This traditional England is possible and in my eyes could play an important geopolitical role.

N: You seem to have been rather vague on the Anglo-Russian side of things. What exactly would Britain's new relationship with Russia look like?

D: Russia can be chiefly concerned with its own culture but can also cooperate with Britain in a multipolar setting. Multipolarity gives us many possibilities for cooperation, ones that are not so limited as those of the failed past.

We stop for a short break. A cowherd and his flock wander by in the meadow and a stream bubbles softly near the wayside.

N: One of your favourite writers, Julius Evola, once said that he believes that we are currently living in the *Kali Yuga* (the Age of Darkness) and therefore everything that happens is determined by this. While St Augustine was a firm advocate of free will and believed that on account of it there is evil in the world. What are your thoughts on this age old dialectic of free will and determinism?

D: I think it's the most important problem because it is the problem of the nature of time, and more precisely the failure of modernity to understand the real nature of time. I think that modern time as linear time was introduced not by the Jews or by historical Christianity as is usually thought, but rather by Calvin and the Protestant reformers. They introduced fate and destiny into the concept of time and thus the absence of free will. And this is logical because if you recognise pre-determination[17] , you need to deny free will. And free will was defended by the Catholics in the famous Council of Trent. It was the central problem for this council, which was against the Reformation and against Calvin. And so, if we believe in free will, we should have a different concept of time. Because if we have real free will we can make a free decision to go our own way. But, in order to have a real possibility to choose our own path of time and the future, there should be two linear futures. Otherwise, a bifurcation moment would be a pure illusion. So, if there is only one destiny then our freedom of choice is reduced to nothing. It is just an illusion and we are following some line that already existed, and we are pretending to have free choice, but there is only one line to follow in one direction. The possibility of choosing the other line and direction is pure illusion. And this is more or less understandable. But if we consider what it means to really have free will in the context of eternity, if we could accept that there is some instance in being that is not affected by time, which includes the future, present and past, including something that is not a function of time, then we recognise something interesting: the existence of an alternative future. This alternative future transforms everything. Maybe it's virtual but it should have some place in being. You can choose one thing and actualise one reality or the other. But in order to ensure that free choice really exists you should have both lines in being. That transforms time into a two dimensional space. So, all the directions that we choose should exist, and not only the one we are following. And that

is precisely what we couldn't understand in traditional society, including Christian traditional society because we are dealing with the post-colonial period and predestination. All modern physics, the scientific vision of modern time is based on the irreversibility and linearity of time, including in physical and material phenomena. But what we have lost precisely in the Reformation is this two dimensional nature of time; time as a space, time created by two lines. There are at least two lines. And if this is so, we are dealing with a completely different concept. I think that there is a freedom of choice and this supposes a different concept of time. But now we are dealing only with fatalism and determinism. We are living in a world with determinism embedded in our very concept of reality. That is modernism, but this is Calvinism. Catholicism defends the freedom of choice and the other concept of time.

N: What do the Orthodox say on this matter?

D: I think they are absolutely on the side of the Catholics and free will. But more than that, Orthodoxy stresses that the freedom of man is not a goal, but an ontological fact. Catholics mention this as well, but we stress it more. A human being is created fully and totally free. The only difference between us and God is power; not freedom. We can decide everything we want, but we have some limitations on putting it into practice, which depends on God's will. But we can choose anything. And after making any kind of choice, we are entering pre-determination. Because the structure of time is not voluntary. The structure of time is pre-defined, but the choice is absolutely free. And I think that is the most important thing with philosophy. We need to rediscover this freedom and to do so we need to revise absolutely the nature of time as a modern science and return to free time. The time where alternative futures exist. I think that's why it's so attractive to fantasy and science fiction writers, because it is maybe a kind of intuitive understanding that something is wrong with this determinism, with this linear time, this totally fictitious freedom of choice inside of that concept of time. So, this is pure illusion. If there is no other option and if we accept the hypothesis of eternity and find it to be crucial, it is pure fiction and illusion. That was precisely the conclusion of Calvin and the Protestants. And this was a scandal for the Catholics and more than just a difference between cults or dogma. That's precisely why the Thirty Years War happened. This was a war over the nature of time. And concerning Evola and the Dark Age, that is not determinism. It is a kind of qualification of the nature of time and space. Now, according to Evola, and in total accordance with the Orthodox tradition, we are living in the time of the Antichrist. Evola calls it by the Indian name *Kali Yuga*, which is the cycle concept of Guénon and Evola. The Orthodox fathers and elders call it apostasy, i.e. Antichrist. And here as well free choice is possible, but we are living not only in the space of hell but also in the time of hell. It is hellish time. But one can always choose the way inside of hell. That is not reducing freedom of will; it is changing the existential conditions. But it is precisely this freedom of choice that could

show us the way out of hell, the way out of modernity. There is a way out of the Dark Age and, in the Antichrists' time and period, we are free to choose which camp we belong to. Being inside the Kali Yuga you can choose to be with the Kali Yuga or with the goddess Kali who fights, according to tradition, against the Kali Yuga. The Kali Yuga is not the age of Kali; it is the Dark Age. And the Dark Age fights against the goddess Kali. Likewise, being in the time of the Antichrist you can choose whom to be loyal to: either to accept modernity with its slavish and linear time, or to revolt. Both possibilities exist. This doesn't mean that we will definitely find the right way or be victorious. For example, in choosing to revolt or fight against the Kali Yuga, maybe we lose or maybe we mistake the right way for the wrong way, or the right way precisely because this choice of freedom is not a privilege. Freedom is not a choice; it's a huge responsibility, almost divine. Because in choosing the wrong way we could actualise hell, negative reality. In some sense we could create that because freedom is great. And maybe the realisation of unlimited freedom is limited only in the case of man. But freedom is divine for us, it is divine 'self'. Free choice is made not only on the level of rationality and the middle level of individuality; mediocrity cannot choose. As Heidegger said, there is a *das Man* figure who never makes a choice. Or better yet, it is the consequences of the wrong choice to follow the line without thinking and imitating and repeating 'they say'. It is the consequence of our *Dasein*; you need to do 'being' here — or 'being' there — to not exist authentically. We are falling into the absence of freedom of choice by making the earlier choice to not exist authentically. But when we return to the possibility of existing authentically, we are returning to the decision that is based precisely on free choice.

N: What exactly do you understand Heidegger to mean by 'living authentically'?

D: To exist authentically is to make a decision about the structure of *Dasein*. You can choose how to be and every human being can choose how to be; not *what* to be but *how* to be. You could live authentically by being the 'self' of *Dasein* or inauthentically by being *das Man,* 'they are'. So you could easily lose or betray your own self. That is the decision. There is no fatality in the Antichrist. There is no fatality in modernity. There is no fatality in the West, and no fatality in technology. There is a choice. There is no fatality in what kind of time to have. There is no fatality in slavery. It is also our choice to be a slave or to be a master. Control is not possession. I think that this is a very important thing about freedom. Time with no freedom is as well a consequences of our freedom. We can decide to be enslaved to mechanical time and technology, but an alternative is possible. There is an alternative time and future that is for us to decide. Nothing is pre-determined but we can't ignore the structure of the choice.

N: But in practice, how do you carry out this conception of choosing what time to exist in? For example, if you are a prisoner you have very little choice over time or almost anything for that matter.

D: No, because that is the problem of how we consider an event. If the event is something that depends absolutely on the outside world, we are already living in the prison of determination, because you depend on something that is an object absolutely outside of you. You have limited power to deal with something that is absolute. But if we put the accent on the meaning of the event, the meaning is not determined. We could ask ourselves why we are here and not what we've done to be here. For example, in Russia you are not in prison when you are guilty; you are in prison when you are in prison. We have many sayings about that; for example, 'we cannot be sure not to be in misery, not to be poor and not to be in prison when we are free and decent people'. Because in Russia there is no direct relationship between crime and punishment. That is precisely a Russian idiom. Going to prison is something that could always happen to you. And our responsibility is to guess 'why'. On the external level there are no explanations or causes. If you are put in prison, it has something to do with you, you have decided that. It is not that you were put in those conditions. There is always something linked to our inner life, to our soul and our self. As Evola (who believed in free choice) reflected when he fractured his spine during the bombing of Berlin in a letter with René Guénon, asking him, 'What do you think about my injury? Why have I decided this?' That is, he was trying to guess what the reason behind it was, which is an interesting position to take. And if we can understand the reason why we are in prison, we could leave it because it's in us. I don't believe in the absolutely independent object, including society, rules, norms and laws that are absolutely inhuman and have nothing to do with subjectivity. I'm a subject; I'm not a materialistic phenomenon. It is not a reflection of society, of nature, or ourselves; the subject has its own free structure, and freedom is the basic element. We could organise our time if we concentrated on ourselves, but in a different way. In that sense, we could create a different future. For example, despite being put in the Soviet system, where there was no freedom at all, people nevertheless had the freedom to say 'yes' or 'no' to that, to recognise its legitimacy or not. So physically we were all obliged to be the slaves of the Soviet system. But some of us recognised the absolute illegitimacy of it.

N: That may be so, but what about a *1984* scenario when the government or state literally tries to control your will?

D: But they failed; communism failed. And capitalism, liberalism tries to gain and win in that situation. I think that *1984* is happening now in the West. The Socialist system tried to control everything but didn't succeed in controlling the essence of man, what I call the 'Radical Subject'. That is precisely a philosophical reflection of how it is possible to be in an absolutely totalitarian society and not be affected by it.

N: But what about those who were affected by it?

D: That was their decision and let me support this with an example. My parents were communists and held to the absolute technical details of the system. They followed the

absolute straight line of everything. Neither in my family nor among my descendants was there any reason to recognise the illegitimacy of the system, because I was embedded in the system in all senses. Ethnically because I'm Russian, socially because I was born into a family of loyal Soviet citizens. Everything was completely inside of that. And I denied that. There was no reason at all for it. But I discovered within myself the existence of something that could decide everything.

N: But were you forced like people in the Gulags?

D: Absolutely.

N: I mean psychologically forced and physically threatened. Like that terrible scene in *1984* when O'Brien threatens the prisoner Winston and says that he is going to put starving rats in a box in front of his mouth and if he didn't submit to the state's physical control of his will, then the rats would be released from the cage into his mouth to feast thereupon. Now, can you really, in such a situation, when you are under such unbelievable pressure as this, still control your own will?

D: Almost biologically that was the case, but that's martyrdom. What is a martyr? The Christian martyrs faced exactly the same situation and won. Because they believed in the 'Radical Subject'. And the 'Radical Subject' believed in them. This is very important.

N: Perhaps it is easier for Christians to survive such ordeals because they believe that death is not the end, and that they will meet their reward later in heaven. But people who don't believe in eternity have nothing to hold onto.

D: If they don't believe in eternity, they are lost already. They are already doomed. They are already in hell. And they are already dead — with or without rats. That is the end. If you don't believe in eternity, eternity doesn't believe in you. You are completely a part of practical time. And the reason I think liberalism and the West could repeat *1984* now is because they are trying to replace humans. The Soviets tried to conquer the human, to control everything that was human, but still they conserved the human and by conserving the human they conserved *Dasein*. And the essence of *Dasein* is the Radical Subject; the possibility of deciding to live authentically. And this decision unbeknownst to them was the doom of the Soviet Union, as we said 'no'. Maybe I have already mentioned this, but in the beginning of the 80s I composed a song called *The End of the Soviet Union is Very Near* and all my friends were absolutely astonished because this was the flourishing period of the Soviet Union. But I didn't mean that it could happen and that we needed to actually fight. That was impossible, quite impossible. But I meant the fight against it should be based on the Radical Subject. It was a kind of recognition of the illegitimacy of the system on the ontological level. And in that sense it was the end of the Soviet Union. It was the end of the prison. I think that the same situation is happening now with globalisation, liberalism and technology. There is the same will to control, the same will to impose some paradigm, some destiny, some situation on the

world. In the Soviet Union they understood that they couldn't understand anymore the possibility of still being human and of controlling, so they tried to replace human with machines. The only way, really, to control that is to destroy, to deny this radical subjectivity, this freedom of choice and not pre-determination of time, and the story played by the human. With machines that is possible, if we deny *Dasein,* because the difference between a human and a machine is not based on automatism, as humans are automatic in some ways, as well as relations in a social way (as a sociologist I could give you an example). We are completely a part of social measures. But what we have and what robots don't have is *Dasein*, a relationship with death. And I think this is precisely the situation we are living in now and why decisions and free choices are concerning for liberal society and globalisation, because we could recognise the illegitimacy of this replacement, not the replacement, but the illegitimacy. I think that the robot is *das Man*. It's a kind of consequence of the decision to not exist authentically. So, the robot as *das Man* is a kind of second arrival or second coming of *das Man*.

N: Do you think that man was granted the possibility to create a robot in order to realise his own immortality?

D: No, I think not. I think robots try to create themselves through man.

N: In what sense? Do you believe that they have their own free will and desire for existence from the beginning?

D: If we consider matter as something completely independent from man or nature, then that is materialism, the most common thing in the world. If we recognise the absolute independence of matter or nature, in terms of evolution, then it should proceed further than humans. And so, according to this concept, materialistically in this evolutionary development we are just used as monkeys were, as a means to an end. I think that nature, according to this concept, has used the monkey in order to bring forth man. And now the same matter is trying to use the human in order to create robots. We were fooled. We thought that we were the centre of the universe, but we, according to this concept, were just the instruments of robots that want to be manifested. No, I believe we were created from God and by God. And we were originally created in a much better condition than we are now. We have lost something that we possessed before. It's the concept of traditional creationism. I'm a Christian. And I strictly believe in everything the Bible has said. But I think that we have somewhat lost the keys for that. So, generally it's all quite right. The Bible, for me, is the absolute authority. But, the interpretation of the Bible can be understood in many ways. And here, in the interpretation of the Bible, we are free. Not free based on our own intellect, but we are free existentially, metaphysically, in that deep meaning of the Bible we are free. It is not a question of tradition or change of denomination; it's much deeper, I think. The reading of the Bible is the task of the Radical Subject, so we need to read it with the spiritual

eyes of the man inside of us. Otherwise we will get only a superficial sense. We need to find its deeper level in order to understand its message fully.

We took our leave from that peaceful and holy monastery and on the pondering roads back to Moscow as the evening grew dim I probed for further details of Professor Dugin's Magnum Opus…

N: Could you explain to me what each Logos means? And why are there only three Logoi, and not five or seven, for example?

D: The idea of multiplying Logoi is not the goal in my studies. I have written a book that is called *In search of the Dark Logos*. My idea was to find a kind of alternative Logos, the most convenient one. And I followed the typology of Nietzsche concerning Apollo and Dionysus. I started from the proposition that the second Logos should be Dionysian. This duality is more or less accepted by culture, and in philosophy it's generally used. It is nothing special. I have called it Logos, but maybe it can be called differently. Because I studied myths, I thought there was a concept of mythos and Logos; how myth preceded Logos, and how Logos was born. And my idea was to challenge the idea of one Logos, which was born from mythos, and to prove that there are two Logoi: the Logos that was born from mythos and the Logos of mythos. So, mythos was not pre–logical but alternately logical. That was more or less the substance of the debates between Jean Dubuffet and Lévi-Strauss. And Lévi-Strauss explained that pre-logical mentality was logical, but of a slightly different logic, but at the same time it was the same logic. Jean Dubuffet affirmed that the logical society is based on the mystical perception and not on Logos and the rationality of the Greeks.

N: Does your use of Logos have any connection with the Biblical use of the word?

D: No, Logos is something that is born from mythos and is considered to be more structured, more strict and more precise than myth. And there is only one rationality based on Aristotle's three laws: the law of identity (A=A); the law (prohibition) of contradiction (A is not equal to not-A) and the law of the excluded middle (A or not-A is true, there is no third). These three logical causes define it. And I tried to propose an alternative reading of every philosophy based on an alternative Logos, which I have called the 'dark' one. If there is a 'light' one, then there is a 'dark' one. And in my book *In Search of the Dark Logos*, which was a kind of prequel to *Noomakhia*, I didn't want to multiply them. I tried to establish this second one by more or less repeating the anthropological strategy of Lévi-Strauss or the rehabilitation of the myth by Jung. I studied the ideas of Gilbert Duran, about which I have written a book called *Imagination* and, according to Duran, these are precisely the regimes of unconsiousness created from the time of the psychological attitude; this had something to do with the third Logos, but I didn't see it clearly at that moment. I have written a book trying to

combine different cultural, metaphysical, religious phenomena on the two Logoi, the Dionysian and Apollonian in a classical Nietzschean form. And I proposed the Dionysian one based on Hegel, the Dionysian version of Schelling is different.

N: Who was the originator of these two Logoi?

D: Nietzsche. But after I found in one of Robert Fludd's books pictures of two circles with solar icons and the description 'Apollo', and near the other god of the night, the Moon, was written 'Dionysus'. Interestingly, I'm absolutely sure that Nietzsche ignored Robert Fludd, because he had no special interest in the occultist works of English mysticism. But I have discovered that Fludd did not explain this picture in his text — I couldn't find anything. Maybe we could find it in his previous versions. But in Nietzsche, it was clearly a typology that was taken by hundreds, thousands of authors. It was almost common place, I would say — the Dionysian against the Apollonian. And there is the idea that all the 20th-century philosophers tried to exchange the Apollonian attitude with the Dionysian one. But that is common place.

N: And what exactly does the Dionysian Logos entail?

D: The Dionysian Logos is inclusive. If, for example, the Apollonian Logos is something we know and is based on the exclusivity of Aristotle's three laws, the Dionysian Logos is based on passion, emotion and always in contradiction with the three laws. And my idea was that there is not only a violation and negative attitude toward the Apollonian Logos, but that this negation was a Logos in itself. That is, it was not an absence of structure, but it was an alternative structure. It is not a kind of prevention of Logos, although it was considered to be a prevention of this traditional Logos. It is not irrationality, it is the *other rationality*. And so, the idea was to consider the two Logoi myth as completely structured and rational but in different senses.

N: So you just built on Nietzsche's concept then?

D: Yes, I developed it, but it wasn't so much Nitzschean at the time as it was Jungian and many other authors, French post-modernists, art critics, Patal, Blanshow. It's a big tradition, almost self-evident. But the difference was I've tried to establish some routes of this Logos and not to consider it to be passion, lies, irrationality or post-logical, or emotional, intuitive, illogical. I tried to say 'no, there are other laws'. There is the structure and the myth, such as the structure of Dionysian inclusivity, which could be developed in the full scale of methodological approach, and which will give a completely different picture of what is called 'marginal' in the philosophical science. For example, we consider that logic is based on the Logos of Apollo. And for all the other things that we consider to be irrational, mystical etc, I tried to establish laws for them. Going that direction and studying the philosophical system, the methodological subject, different linguistics problems or philosophical religious problems, I came to the conclusion that what was made generally by all authors of Dionysus is based on contradiction. Something not Dionysian at all with a completely different structure. So,

that was a moment of empiric encounter with the Logos of Cybele. And the Logos of Cybele was found… I searched for the 'Dark Logos' and I found the 'Black' one. So that was, I would say, purely empirical. Because I didn't want to multiply anything. I thought it's quite enough to establish the Dionysian Logos in order to cover all the types of the methodological, philosophical, cultural and new religious phenomena. And that was very exciting; this is described in the prequel.

N: Is your discovery of the Cybelian Logos something completely new in academia?

D: On the one hand, there were some thoughts before that gravitated around this concept. But it wasn't introduced as a Logos. It is considered as an ancient matriarchy that doesn't exist anymore. Something completely belonging to the past. And so methodologically accepted, but because of feminism it is not so old. And my opinion on time depends on the Logos. Time is not an absolute line, every kind of Logos creates its own time. What you are calling the past in the Apollonian concept is one thing, in the Dionysian it is another.

N: I thought you can't call anything 'the past' in the Apollonian concept because, according to it, there is no past, present or future, only eternity.

D: Yes, but there are different forms of Apollonian logic and rationality, but that is right in essence. In a Dionysian sense, the past is the future as well — it's a cycle.

N: In the Dionysian concept, can you even specify a particular moment, like the past or future, as they are all the interconnected parts of the circular nature of time?

D: Yes, it's a circle. But there are relative periods inside of the circle. Every past is a season. For example, linear time is sort of Apollonian as well. On the one hand it is eternity, but on the other it is a ray. Eternity expresses itself by a ray, it's all past and can acquire some Apollonian meaning, in a sense. But what is interesting, once I had discovered the 'Black Logos of Cybele', I received a perfect picture of all the combinations and stages included in the Dionysian concept. For example, I used two works of Carl Kerenyi on Dionysus and Vyacheslav Ivanov's *Dionysianism and pre-Dionysianism*. And what is called in Kerenyi and Ivanov 'pre-Dionysian' is precisely Cybelian. And after that I explained why. In Bachofen as well I discovered a sort of third Logos: it is a kind of modern *Das Mutterrecht* but at the same time something more complex. So I reread Bachofen and discovered that he considered the Dionysian period to be the patriarchy against the matriarchy, which is more or less the same in my vision. Once you know what to search for, you find it. If you read something without any idea what to look for, you find nothing. Instead, you find everything and you cannot choose. So, that was a kind of obsession.

N: But, equally, already knowing what you are looking for could perhaps prejudice your investigation. Was your approach bold enough to get to the root of the issue? Maybe, you could push your investigation of the Apollonian, Dionysian and Cybelian

Logoi even further and, using different combinations of these three Logoi, perhaps even discover two or three more Logoi?

D: Yes, but it is radical because the Cybelian Logos isn't recognised by anybody as a Logos. For example, in Plato there is the father, the son and the *khora*[18] . Khora means 'matter' and is precisely the absence of Logos. Platonism is an Apollonian tradition. That is why the khora is totally devoid of the possibility of Logos. So, in classical rationality we can get the idea that the Great Mother has thought, precisely because in the Apollonian version it couldn't. So, matter doesn't exist. It is a purely negative concept because of the exclusiveness of the Apollonian Logos. You deny the existence of the object, you consider the object a reflection of Eidos or something. But to go from Apollonian logic to Cybelian is almost impossible.

N: The Greeks knew two types of world: the world of ideas and forms represented by Plato, and then the material world identified by the senses, which Epicurus and Democritus represented. Surely within this latter school the Cybelian Logos can be found?

D: You can regard the senses as a lesser form of distinguishing. I studied Heraclitus and found him to be Dionysian. But yes, Democritus is a materialist, as well as Epicurus and Lucretius, and they are representatives of a purely Cybelian Logos.

N: So they adopted this materialistic approach to the world, but they just didn't think to name the driving Logos behind it?

D: Yes. And when I discovered Cybelian Logos as something structural, not historical, it meant that I could apply it to the pre-Socratic world, modernity, Galileo, or Marx. It is something that you could use universally, including in something like Indian philosophy. You can find it everywhere, or almost everywhere. In one situation it will be materialist philosophy. In another it will be the consequences of the images of the same chthonic materialist version. It is always possible, but we need to study the case. We need to speak carefully about matter, earth, sense, feelings. It might be Cybelian or it might not be. It could be a projection of our own Logos. So, it is not so easy. It is interesting that the next step was to decide whether the Dionysian Logos is a Logos in itself or is just a combination, a kind of intermediary between the Logoi of Cybele and Apollo. This is precisely what I've tried to solve. We have individuated some form of Gnosticism in Aristotle's *Physics*. Gnosticism is the idea that we are living in the world that is created by the Evil God. And so, there is a kind of contradiction and there is not a direct relation with the positive God and God creating in a Platonic way. This Platonic dualism was quite Dionysian and not Cybelian, because Gnostics didn't agree with the material world, they were against it. But not in a direct way, which was problematic in Platonism. All the intermediate forms of Logos fall into the concept of the Logos of Dionysus. And I began to study the Hermetic tradition in cosmology in some form that is not clearly Apollonian, while neither clearly materialistic. I created a

kind of frame. So, I received three frames based on three structures of verticality, a kind of cyclical and negative verticality. Materialism or Titanism is when you are starting from the lowest point/element and trying to challenge heaven.

N: And how would you describe the Dionysian movement?

D: It's horizontal, or more precisely circular. Dionysus is in the centre as a kind of pole and everything is moving around him. It is a kind of dynamic eternity, and not a fixed eternity.

N: To what extent is this influenced by the myth of Dionysus?

D: Yes, I've studied all the information about the myths of Dionysus and that falls absolutely into it. His decent to hell, his return, his being torn apart by Titans, and being called by Zeus his 'Heir' because an heir is something new, something which comes next. It was the perfect definition of the middle god who could arrive in hell and come to Cybele. Cybele cured Dionysus from the madness that was imposed on him by Hera. Why? Because comparing Dionysian irrationality with Cybelian makes it appear to be rational; it's not madness anymore. The real madness is the love of Cybele. Many myths can be explained this way. After that I tried to apply that to philosophy. And this time, with three Logoi, generally anything can be explained. Having two Logoi is not enough; it is too few, while four is absolutely unnecessary. So, the idea is not to multiply them. Initially, I tried to deal with two Logoi and I failed, because I had a strong feeling that I couldn't explain what I wanted to explain. For the authors dealing with two Logoi previously, by adding a third, everything is clarified immediately. This serves as a kind of inspiration for them, similar to the discovery of gravity, for example. After this discovery, if you search for something like an explanation in physics, it's like someone says 'ah there is gravity to explain it'. So, it is universally accepted, not by everybody, but by people searching for an explanation of physical phenomena. Newton was a revelation for the specialists, not for the general public. So that is more or less the methodological approach. And when I explained it to the people dealing with myths, cultural studies, for them it was a source of illumination. Because I think there is a general feeling of insufficiency in this very protective idea of two Logoi, just because two Logoi are more correct than one.

N: And speaking of physical phenomena, where do the sciences like biology and chemistry fit into your scheme? Do they fall under the Cybelian Logos?

D: Yes, they do. And in addition, they try to give something like a Cybelian interpretation to Apollonian Logos.

N: And what about maths and physics? Are they Apollonian?

D: I would say physics is Dionysian, while maths is Apollonian. There is a presumption to treat Dionysian phenomena with an Apollonian approach. And this is absolutely wrong. For example, what is logical? An element or a mathematical or geometrical point, something that is absolutely anti-physical and couldn't exist in the

phenomenological world? A point, line and fractal theory are a kind of result of an absence of concreteness and precision to study the physical world, because they are formed by a dualistic definition. I think that we don't properly understand Aristotle's *Physics* as well as we think, that the world of the object and logic are quite the same.

N: Take, for example, the concept of energy. We don't really know what energy is but we can see the effects of what it does when we put a battery in a toy car: it starts to work. So in a materialistic sense, from effects we get some sort of understanding of an abstract concept. How do you explain this?

D: Believing in the Cybelian world, accepting Cybelian rules, making Cybelian gestures, accepting the Cybelian myth, we are just involved in that. That is the structure (energy, gravity) that defines our own law, and our own Cybelian Logos finally. I don't say it's an illusion, absolutely not. I think the Apollonian version is one interpretation of what is going on. An absolutely self-sufficient interpretation. But, equally, in the Dionysian interpretation everything is quite autonomous, you can explain everything.

N: What would the Dionysian explanation be?

D: For example, it finished and then it started again. I remark, it's a phenomenological approach; I have no idea how it works and I have no interest in knowing. It just simply stopped and then it worked again.

N: Some might call that a rather simplistic explanation.

D: Simplistic, that's interesting. Do you know what the phenomenology of Husserl is? He said that we are walking and acting in two realities: the scientific one and *Lebenswelt*. Lebenswelt is the world of life. It is the most important philosophical concept of the 20th century. It is precisely the moment when the scientist leaves his lab and becomes naive. For example, if he sees a man with a scarf on the other side of the road, he's almost sure that it is a woman. But maybe it's not. Maybe it's a transvestite. Maybe it's just a gypsy. So the scientist outside of the lab becomes totally naive. He doesn't try to reveal or find out which would be the scientific way of perceiving reality, but that is not the case here, because this method is only used in the lab working in a specific field. In other fields the scientist is very naive. He believes in democracy, in communism, in God or nothing. And in dealing with prejudices of any kind he shares the most naive ideas of the masses. But what is interesting is that everybody else accepts scientists. So, they are taking for granted everything.

N: Isn't this just a sort of dressed up theory of common sense? The man on the street is wiser than the expert on the simple things that really matter in life.

D: No, not this. Husserl developed the whole process of how we perceive the world and he developed this by building on Franz Brentano's concept of intentionality. Intentionality means that we are dealing with intentional objects. We are dealing not with a scientific object — a proof, measure, experience — but with intention and the essence of the real object we are dealing with is intentional.

N: What does this mean in practice?

D: We don't prove existence and the quality of an object by special procedure. We are satisfied with our own presentation of an idea. So we are projecting in an intentional process some presentation outside. And we think honestly that we are dealing with an object. But we are dealing with the presentation of our mind that is called *noema*. And the process of intentionality is called *noesis* — a Greek term. So, noema is what we think a thing is, in a naive way, in Lebenswelt. But scientifically it is not so. Science proves that if you see something, it is not enough to consider that it exists. It may be an illusion or something not exactly so. But in Lebenswelt we do so; we are dealing with approximation and we almost never try to prove what we see. In Lebenswelt we consider the time that concerns us. For example, the time we are living in and the place that is close to us. And we have our special measure of things that is called phenomenological measure. So, it may seem naive, but according to Husserl science is naive. Husserl wrote quite an important work called *The Crisis of European Science and Transcendental Phenomenology* in which he underlined the point that scientists precisely forget to study the process of their relation to reality and they start from the end. So, they are in the objective world and they are lost when they try to explore the things of the world. They forget about their attitude.

N: They are too concerned by the mechanical cause and effect of things and not just by the brute fact of a thing — is that what he is trying to say?

D: Maybe, but all that cause and effect of things is based on the missing link that is intentionality. And, we are passing too quickly through this process without intentionality and thought about how our perception and creation of reality works, and how we are dealing with *Gestalt*, images and concepts.

N: Is this a kind of development of the Platonic forms? For example, we should consider the idea of the chair first, before we consider the object of the chair itself.

D: Maybe, but in a concrete sense it is not Platonic. For example, phenomenologists don't believe in ideas. They see the object we are dealing with as a product of intentionality. It's much more Dionysian, and not Apollonian. It is not a belief in the reality of ideas. For them the only reality is intentional.

N: So, through your intention you have willed this chair to exist?

D: No, *exist* is not the correct word. Phenomenologists say we shouldn't evoke it, as it is too difficult a concept. The existential sign of existence is completely prohibited in the case of phenomenology. So, maybe something exists, but maybe not; it is of no importance. We need to study perception.

N: So, I perceive that this is a chair. This is intentionality, yes?

D: Yes, because I see something else and I don't think it's a chair; maybe it's something else. I have no direct thought about this thing. Before, I wondered if it's a

chair or something else. But now, I see it's a chair as someone is sitting there. Now I'm sure.

N: But with this approach, it seems like there is not an independent and objective form of truth from the beginning, rather you have to wait till the end until hopefully your perception becomes clear. It's a strange form of knowledge that stakes its success or failure on the small interval period between ignorance and enlightenment.

D: Knowledge is the process we too easily conceive as something that exists independently from us. Because if we concentrate closely on this almost infinitely small moment of perception, we discover that it's an act of knowledge. It's a very complicated thing. And there are so many things that are not scientific inside so many beliefs. For example, the pragmatism of the American school is the same. In order to deal with an object, we need to believe not in the object but in many things that have nothing to do with the object, and in many things with no critical evaluation of it.

N: So, in your view — regardless of approach — you need to make a lot of assumptions?

D: Yes.

We drive deeper into the night, my eyelids grow heavy, but our previous conversation still illuminates Alex…

D: The idea is that we conceive immediately the object with all its details. For example, the chair has a strange form, but we are only absolutely sure it's a chair when someone is sitting on it. Maybe, it's just a board or something like that for other purposes. This naive way of thinking is on the level of Lebenswelt. We are dealing with a complex object with no qualities or measures.

N: So, you can only define a chair by its functionality?

D: Yes, by its functionality. There is no chair in and of itself; it is always linked to something else. And it's a kind of context, the same idea as watching. Any context is contextual. And we are dealing with the existential context, not in the way that it is not, but rather in the way it exists for us, in our concrete situation. It is a kind of special philosophy that is neither material nor logical, neither subjective nor objective — it is phenomenological. We need to study it, according to Husserl, as a phenomenon.

N: And it really has nothing to do with Plato's idea of forms; that we know the chair because it takes the form of a chair?

D: In a Platonic sense the form could exist without the chair. But a phenomenon is something that is, as such, not a reflection of some paradigm, but neither does it consist of matter.

N: But we identify it through our materialistic senses.

D: Because we believe in senses. And phenomenology doesn't believe in senses as such.

N: But, if I don't believe in my senses, I won't even start to wonder what it is I see or hear because I wouldn't trust them or use them to identify things correctly. And so in the example of the chair, which we explored above, using the phenomenological approach I would not be able to identify it.

D: Yes, but this is secondary. The senses are not so important. What is important are perception and phenomena. We should study phenomena as phenomena, without saying this is material. And this is a reflection of a subjective idea that exists outside of us. It is artificial, an illusion; it is phenomena. Everything is phenomena. And this is the Dionysian way to perceive reality. You don't operate with the concept of matter or ideas — that is Aristotelian physics, where you presume that there is something material there and something ideal. But phenomena are not a kind of mixture or confusion, they are something other that is thought of as such. If you are dealing with things and the thing is not composed of matter because it is not a reflection of an idea in a phenomenological way, it is phenomenon. And phenomena are in the middle between matter and spirit. And it's not sensual because senses as well represent something material.

N: But in order to perceive, which is so important in phenomenology, surely you need your senses, otherwise how else will you do so?

D: If you separate our perception of the sensual from the intellectual perception, then yes. But, the phenomenological approach is not to separate them, it's something unique. Phenomenology is not about 'this is a chair'. The chair is here; the chair is composed by the need to see the chair in this situation. And it's not about the senses because you have other senses, for example, feeling the wind. But under a rational approach, when you are looking at a chair, nobody doubts it is a chair.

N: So it is description without judgement?

D: Yes, absolutely. Judgement is something Apollonian.

N: So, when I see you, Alexander, driving a car I would say 'Alexander is driving a car'.

D: That is precisely it. We see that he (Alexander) is driving a car, it is not Elon Musk, the car is not driving itself, and we rely on him, we think he is a good driver.

N: But we don't critique how he's doing it?

D: Absolutely, no judgement. Judgement is Apollonian. And phenomenology is not an explanation; we don't try to prove it.

N: So, it is just pure description?

D: Yes, description without judgement. Description of how we perceive reality. But, little by little, with a simple description it becomes philosophy. And that is what Heidegger explores. He was the best disciple of Husserl. This is why he described

much more than explained or judged. And Heidegger tries to find the way to remove judgement from phenomena. So we are dealing with judgement always, in metaphysics and Platonism, etc. And when Alex (the actor) drives in an authentic way, he has forgotten about 'self'. He is so completely and mechanically involved in being a driver that he forgets that he's an actor who plays Hamlet.

N: So, it is a matter of total submersion in one's action?

D: Absolutely, because outside or inside, in the core, he is here. And he has absolutely forgotten us having our conversation here — he is too deeply involved. So, we are driving, sleeping, eating, reading and whilst doing so, we have absolutely lost ourselves. We have lost the route of judgement. Our judgement is when we make a completely alienated judgement of the other. And we consider them to be ours. That's because we don't exist. So, we accept it easily. If, for example, we knew that in five minutes we would be dead, all of us would think differently. We would have a completely different conversation. We would feel about ourselves differently. And this is precisely what Heidegger is more or less all about, that in such circumstances described above, our judgement, our science, our logic and our Apollonian Logos would be different.

N: Thus, because we are so involved in phenomena, we forget about the greater picture of ourselves?

D: Absolutely. However, it is not greater but just without context, because the context is not so important. And that is why death is so important for Heidegger. In front of death we forget about Alexander driving the car, or making a film or other things. And we immediately start to think about what we should think always, what we were supposed to dedicate our living to, to think about being present.

N: If I started to do this now during our conversation, how would it manifest itself?

D: Maybe you would stop.

N: But, if you did this authentic contemplation of your own death all the time, it would paralyse you in some ways and you wouldn't be able to do anything else.

D: No, Heidegger thought that if we are living in front of death we begin to speak differently, to drive a car differently. And he explains that in a special way.

N: How could he prove that?

D: Philosophy in the majority of cases is art. Heidegger, including the New Wave, the New Realism of Italy, proposed many forms to express authentic or inauthentic living. There is an Antonioni film where a war correspondent exchanges his identity with a dead person in order to get an authentically new life. He was absolutely sure that his previous life was not authentic. He didn't know what would be authentic and he exchanged personality in order maybe to live authentically. That was the case. So that's very interesting in Antonioni.

N: Which film is that, *The Passenger*?

D: Yes, this is one of the many illustrations of how we could explain or describe authenticity or not, with the language of art and/or images. And that is what it is all about.

N: Can you just explain how exactly Antonioni showed that this character was not living authentically?

D: The character was in some desert reporting about something and suddenly he found by accident a body with no relation to his history. And at that moment he perceived his identity, by doing his job; living inauthentically all his life had nothing to do with him, with himself. And this was a kind of illumination. So he took the documents of this man and put his passport into his pocket, and went away. He didn't care about this man, but little by little he got involved in his life. The problem is not about exchanging one inauthentic life for another; what is important is this moment of decision. This deep sense that something is wrong on the metaphysical level. So we are dealing with judgement, which is completely alienated from us.

N: And did he learn this lesson by remembering his mortality, and that he is going to die?

D: Yes, the decision he made (the decision to stop) was good, but the solution was bad.

N: How would he have achieved a good solution?

D: That is very difficult because it's not formal. If you know already what to do, then this is inauthentic, it's already judgement. But he attracted our attention to the essence of the problem. For example, when Alexander told us yesterday of how he had changed profession. I think this is precisely the existential call from inside, a change from being an engineer to an actor, and then a change from being an actor to a driver.

N: And how can someone live more authentically?

D: Concentrate more on philosophy, and maybe on death. But the call inside of Alexander is the right one. It's his own. It's just up to him to decide. I suggest that we shouldn't concentrate too much on what is a good decision. It could not be defined from the beginning. It's a kind of process. The authentic way of life is something that is possible only by experience. Only by trying and experiencing the insufficiency of an inauthentic life. Inauthentic life could be described as *das Man* — what they say. They judge you. And when you come into the process of discovery of what is authenticity, it is a process, it is life itself. But when we follow *das Man* there is no life. It is a robot.

N: So maybe you achieve this state only by continually questioning what you are doing?

D: Something like that, and being more or less similar to Socrates.

N: …engaging in a constant process of questioning and searching.

D: Yes, not knowing is knowledge, the first step into knowledge and maybe the last. So, not only the first, it is a process; a process to feel or to have conviction.

N: Thus the only way to exist authentically is to be a searcher?

D: Maybe. Searcher is the right name because you know Parmenides' concept of truth. Truth, according to Heidegger, is *Aletheia* — that which is not veiled, not hidden. But that which is not hidden is not evident.

N: It should be found, but you need to look for it.

D: Yes, the search is necessary even if it's phenomenological. But inside of phenomena there is phenomenological truth, not judgment. And that's the authenticity which we need seek and search for. Thesis in Greek is precisely the way to pass from Doxa to Aletheia, from opinion to truth.

N: And where does death come into this then?

D: Death is the door to truth because there is no truth without death. And all truth appears in death.

N: What is your opinion of how Tolstoy depicts death in his masterpiece *The Death of Ivan Ilyich*? In the end, is the protagonist, Ivan Ilyich, trying to live authentically because he finally begins to really think about his death and the fear of this awakes something deep within him? And consequently he begins to reconsider the meaning of his own life? Isn't that a good example of the existential search brought on by a reflection of one's own mortality?

D: No, no, that is precisely how an inauthentic way of living is considered before death because death is considered in a completely negative light. Death has nothing to do with that materialistic, non-spiritualistic concept. There is an end that is the limit. And the end is something that precisely defines us, as *Dasein*. For example, if our *Dasein* had no end, we would be dead. So the only way we live it is to be defined by that circle. And when we feel death as something that encircles us, we are living precisely. And if you remember that completely authentic living is to be always on the edge of death.

N: That is more or less in line with the popular philosophy 'to live every day as if it were your last'?

D: This is Roman ideology.

N: It sounds like Heidegger in a nutshell.

D: Yes. For example, there is a Russian Orthodox saying *pamyat smertnaya*, (remember death). And that is a rule for the good.

N: This is also in the Catholic Church. We have a saying that every day of your life you should think about death, judgement, and heaven and hell.

D: Great, this is at least the Catholic version of the same existential idea. When you lose this fundamental idea, you will lose Catholicism, you will lose the real faith because without that there is no meaning in the words of Christ. And the action is not the measure of authenticity.

N: And the outside observer would never be able to know for sure if you are living authentically?

D: No, he could only guess.

N: Ok, and how exactly is this connected with the Dionysian Logos?

D: Phenomenology is precisely the Logos of Dionysus. That was the discovery of something that existed always, and hermeticism and dialectic. In some paradoxical way, phenomenology is a kind of rational explanation of what it all is, in my opinion. It doesn't say that there are ideas or there is matter. It doesn't, like Democritus, say that everything is made from atoms, etc. It says that there is only phenomena and eit xplains the way to be inside of the phenomenological situation. And the way is the most important — you could apply it to everything. And that is why existentialism was so popular, because you could apply it to poetry, to philosophy, to science. For example, Heidegger was declared the rector of the University of Freiburg. And he made a great speech that all *Daseins* that are under my control now should be absolutely revised. They consist of false judgements not because they are false, but because they are inauthentic and not rooted in the authentic phenomenological description of Lebenswelt by us scientists. In his *Black Notebooks* he described how he was being nominated as a rector 'too early' because he tried to destroy not only the university, but the *zeit* and to propose that all scientists forget about chemistry. And he made the remark in this 'notebook' that it was too early for them, but they didn't understand that.

N: What exactly was he proposing in terms of academic study then? What was one allowed to study?

D: Yes, you should revise everything because it was all based on judgements with no existential roots. But sacred science, alchemy, magic, astrology…

N: So he would replace biology, chemistry, etc. with magic and…

D: No, I would replace them with these, but Heidegger was much more… for example, with philology, Thomas Aquinas…

N: The man who tried to marry faith and reason together…

D: Yes, and also Albert the Great; they composed the treaties on philology, alchemy, on the transformation of the metals of minerals, or botanics.

N: These are what modern scientists now call the pseudo-sciences.

D: This is a kind of integrated science, real science, sacred science but that was a pure Apollonian version. Heiddeger proposed the same principle but in the existential Dionysian way. It would be a fun science, as Nietzsche called it in a French manner in his book *Le Gai Savoir*.[19] In French it means 'The Gay Science', a kind of 'funny knowledge'. So, I think that Heidegger would introduce the Nietzschean concept of 'funny science'. And now it is called 'ironic science' in post-modernism.

N: And what did these people do in 'funny science'?

D: I think that 'funny science' is not a stupid science or comedy. Funny science is science based on existence and rhetoric. It is Dionysian science.

N: Yes, but what exactly do they do in this science?

D: I think, for example, alchemy. Alchemy is a funny science because you are speaking about ancient gods, about metals, about chemical reactions on the same level. So you pass from myth to exact knowledge. You are trying to measure for example the quantity of Mars or Saturn in a serious way but by doing very funny things and arriving at some concrete results. But it's really funny to read alchemical texts.

N: Alchemists, aren't they the people most famously associated with trying to find the philosopher's stone in order to turn base metals into silver or gold? This idea is largely mocked by the modern scientific community now and has instead become the subject of a *Harry Potter* novel.

D: I think that the problem is not in its being scientific or not. In their vision, so-called gold is the next stage of the growth of metal. They considered metals as living beings, as something that should be matured. For example, corn in the end of Autumn becomes bright. And since gold is a bright metal, you need to help this metal become bright. And it's a funny way of thinking. And the most funny result is to receive gold.

N: Did they ever actually manage to get gold from base metal?

D: From time to time they achieved it, as the alchemists affirm.

N: What was the method?

D: They recommended taking two-thirds of Saturn and mix it maybe with Venus. This provokes a very interesting imagination or poetry. I've studied alchemy by the way.

N: Did you make any gold, Alex?

D: No, no. I studied it as a funny science, as something irrational. But there is a kind of logic in this irrationality and Evola has written a book on alchemy. It is a very interesting 'hermetic science'.

N: So, if it was up to you, would you replace the study of modern science with subjects like alchemy and the study of the occult?

D: With a different occult, it should be funny, not necessarily astrology or magic, but it should still be easy, alive and joyful, and not so boring as actual science is.

N: So, in your opinion achieving concrete results is not necessary for science? For you the process is more important; it should be fun?

D: Absolutely, because nobody is looking for a result. A scientist is happy with his maths or physics formulas. And it's boring. For example, I was participating in a scientific congress in Tokyo some years ago. And I explained my vision of science. And everybody was very happy because the scientists said our Superstring theory is precisely funny science! So modern science with its fractals and super string theory is much more Dionysian; it doesn't believe much in particles. And particles are a kind of hallucination for it. These scientists are living in a completely magical world today and

they hate the old kind of science with its mechanics and linear time. Modern scientists are much more ironic. For example, synergy and Ilya Prigogine's concept that there is some irreversibility, some chaotic processes in unsolvable equations that could be solved, if accepted as such. Or we need some dimension to add to our four dimensional space and time continuum in order to solve that. Once more, I'm not speaking about completely absurd things. There is a kind of reflection of this in modern science. For example, I have exchanged letters with Dmitry Polyakov, one of the world's leading scientists in the field of Superstring theory. He is a director of the Institute of South Korea. He's very interesting and he's an old friend of mine. And he was involved with other scientists of great renown in modern science in the field of Superstring theory and the knot of time. It is very important as he explained to me and something purely alchemical. Knot theory is precisely the multidimensional particle of the ten dimensional world. Four dimensions we know and six dimensions we don't know; we can only guess. And in dealing with that, in modern science and modern physics, we always have debates. And in my opinion we should go back and start new physics. They are now arriving at the right conclusion because they have jettisoned all the wrong ways and it's only the right way for them now. But, it is impossible to solve all the contradictions of modern science without making a return. He (Dmitry) mostly agreed with me. He reads Guénon but nevertheless he continued to use all the tools of classical modern science.

N: Is your solution to combine elements of both classical modern science and this new Dionysian interpretation of science that you have described?

D: I think we need to return to the Renaissance and to start once more from exactly the same point and develop modernity. It is possible to do this because I think the Renaissance was a great age when we discovered the Dionysian Logos, precisely in Florence, Italy. That was great and it was all lost in materiality because of Protestantism, rationalism, and materialism. They stole it after the Renaissance and we need to restore that and redevelop it. There is a very important English author, Frances Yates, who explored the Rosicrucian Enlightenment. I think that this was a shadow of a parallel process of development; this Renaissance science on the march towards this modern materialist science. And in the beginning, Boyle, Newton and the others as well were part of this much richer aspect. But the next generation reduced this much broader context to something materialistic. For example, there is a book on alchemy called *An Open Entrance to the Closed Palace of the King*. And there is a copy of this book with many notes from Newton. So he studied that work, this completely funny science, very seriously. And that was the same with the discovery of gravity. So I think that this was his worst discovery.

N: Thus, you are not proposing using one type of science in order to help the other, you just want to get rid of the Cybelian concept of science completely.

D: Yes, I think we have had enough of it.

N: So, in your view, essentially we don't need any more technological development?

D: It should be in a different way. For example, who discovered gunpowder? The Chinese. And they used it for fireworks. And then, Europeans discovered it and used it for weapons. So in one way it's very good, it's for fireworks. From the other perspective, as weapons, it is very bad. So, I'm for discoveries, which are for fun, for joy.

N: What about for health?

D: Yoga, for example. You know that yoga serves to kill the body in Indian culture? Not to make it healthy. It is a method to kill the body as soon as possible. To make you lose the activity of your hands and to stay in the same pose until the end of your life. So, not to prolong life, and not to improve your health. This is a funny science again. And I think we could create a kind of automats, but not for serious reasons.

N: Similar to what the Japanese do in creating companion robots?

D: That is a bit suspicious. It's not so funny at all.

N: But, for example, what about using science and technology to find a cure for cancer? Would you be against this?

D: But, cancer is modernity, absolutely. Baudrillard described cancer as a purely modern disease, because its appearance is absolutely unusual with no purpose or function.

N: Perhaps, its purpose is to kill?

D: Yes, it kills. This is why our civilisation will be killed, because now we are in the cancerous period. We are trying to multiply something that has no meaning, no reason, no function. I think technology is possible, but when we stop pursuing this, modernity will be cured. Because the self is in phenomenology, not something material — this is not destiny…

N: And what would you say to the people dying now of lung cancer, for example?

D: So, let them return to the Renaissance. My mother died from cancer. It was a very difficult experience. My best friend, Sergey Kuryokhin, also died from cancer. I think that all of us die for some reason. And I think that cancer is the most stupid disease. The most painful because it's stupid. If you die in a war as a soldier, that's normal. I think that by trying to establish only peace, we kill something in us. So, by trying to be in comfort, we pay for this desire by the torture of cancer. In a way we deserve that. Modern men deserve that, because it's a kind of decision to live inauthentically. It's not made by violence or imposition — everyone could decide to live authentically. I don't say that cancer is a result of living inauthentically, but something like that in general. Our society creates a cancerous culture, which creates the same object with no function or reason; it's precisely destruction. And it manifests itself through diseases. The health of man is not something programmed. As Father Vladimir said, we need to find a reason

behind or the phenomenology of the disease. This is what Platonists and phenomenologists say as well.

N: But if not to cure it, then for what?

D: In my opinion, the disease has a reason and a message. We need first of all to interpret it. And that was precisely what traditional medicine was in all societies. We need to individuate what it is.

N: How do you do that?

D: Ah, there are many ways… In Paracelsus' book of different recipes he says how to identify the diseases sent by God that cannot be cured…

N: Is he saying that the Devil gives this type of illness?

D: No, he says differently. For example, a disease may be sent by God and we cannot cure it as it has something to do with justice. Or, this disease is imposed by evil spirits, so we need to curse them. Or perhaps this disease has astrological reasons, we need to find the correspondent relations of the stars and try to fix the situation accordingly.

N: Sounds rather similar to Chinese medicine, where they try to restore the balance within man.

D: Yes, exactly. According to Paracelsus, there are natural diseases you should cure by natural means. But first of all, we need to define the nature of the disease. For us today, every disease is natural and there is only one way to cure them.

N: So, this is a sort of alternative approach to medicine then?

D: Holistic. If we look at the history of medicine, we discover that the medicine that we have as normative is based on a deep assumption of the mechanical construction of man. For example, it was physiological school that compared our lungs with a pump. So this was the study of man as a machine. And now we are trying to make it into a kind of more detailed machine; we consider it as a kind of chemical machine. Holistic medicine tries to regard man as a human, and not only with organs. It considers what his existential reality is and focuses not too much on trying to restore what was before. So, if everything — including disease — has meaning, we need first of all to find the meaning.

N: Of course this approach has a different methodology to modern Western medicine, but surely the end goal is the same, to cure?

D: That depends. For example, if curing the disease will enable the person to continue going the wrong way, to the same wrong health position, maybe it shouldn't be cured. So who decides? I think that the decision should be taken on a philosophical level. If you noticed yesterday that we received the cross with oil, this is a curative process in the Orthodox Church. It is applied mostly on sick people. If we consider ourselves to be sick we go to church, because all of us are sick. And it is a kind of remedy, but in this situation everything takes a holistic approach. You are cured in the church. It is not the priest who cures you; it is Christ who cures you. If you feel better,

you feel grateful not to the priest but to Christ. So you become more and more Christian, more and more sure that there is that most important power.

N: Followers of the Cybelian Logos might say that this is just called the power of positive thinking; you believe you are going to get better, and then you get better.

D: Yes, but every Logos can explain everything. And that Logos decides what exists and how it exists. If you don't notice something, it doesn't exist for you. It is not you who decides, but the Logos. It controls you in some way. From the Logos depends the culture, society, civilisation, propaganda, education, ambience we are living in. Logoi are very powerful and very dangerous things. You can't exchange Logoi in order to change the Logos. It's almost impossible. Sometimes it takes thousands of years to change the proportion of Logoi just a little bit, as was the case of India.

N: Do we know what the driving force behind the change is?

D: I don't know. No idea. I was asked the same thing in the defence of my first thesis (dedicated to the change of scientific paradigm) by a professor; that is, what drives the scientific change? And all I could say was 'I don't know'. It was kind of a scandal I had to go through. Remembering that event many years later, that professor said, it was the only honest scientific answer, the only truth they had ever heard in their life. That was kind of Socratic.

N: Because if you could find out what drove it, perhaps you could control it?

D: Yes, I think so, because Logoi are so powerful, they can't be dealt with.

N: Are there any countries that are purely Apollonian or purely Dionysian throughout their entire history?

D: There has been only one country with a stable Logos: China. It's purely Dionysian, but with a very small hesitation. They couldn't understand Apollonian Logos and that is why they are so interested in Heidegger. That was precisely what professor Wei said; 'We had to accept Heidegger and existentialism as we couldn't understand *weitum* because it is not in our mentality'. Sincerely, this is what he said. This is interesting because, in my opinion, Heidegger is Dionysian and phenomenological as well. And it is fascinating that Indo-European society is based on the Logos of Apollo, but it is not the only Logos. Sometimes the Logos of Cybele wins in Anatolia, Lykea, on some level of Greek culture, which is Neo-Platonism: for example, Democritus, Epicurus and in modernity. But the essence of Indo-European people is Apollonian. This is a kind of radical feature, but not exclusively. From time to time it falls under the influence of Cybelian Logos, as it is now, for example.

N: And why has Europe been stuck for hundreds of years, since the beginning of modernity, under the influence of the Cybelian Logos? If you don't know the answer to this, it will be difficult for you to change it.

D: I can't explain why. But I can show what is happening. There is a return to the Logos of Cybele and that Logos is not new. It's something everlasting and ancient. So,

modernity is very archaic. And the task is not to destroy modernity, but to overcome it. To put the Titans into the abyss. To put the Antichrist in the place he belongs, hell. Now, he is ruling. Modernity now is a kind of revolt of the Titans. And now we must decide which side of the fight we are on. The answer of Indo-Europeans or Christians is to fight on the side of God, including to fall with him, as Christ and the martyrs did. Although Christ was killed by Jews, we are still on his side nevertheless. Maybe we will lose everything, but we will be on the side of God. And so the task is to fight against modernity, not necessarily to defeat it, but to fight against it nevertheless.

N: But both the Titans and Satan were defeated. You believe they have now returned?

D: Yes, they escaped somehow.

N: So, you believe that the Cybelian Logos can't be destroyed, it can only be put it in its place? Why is that?

D: Absolutely. According to the Apollonian Logos, there is always an option to destroy. But with the Dionysian Logos, it's much more important to conserve, but keep it in its correct position. For example, Apollo wants to destroy it completely, but Dionysus wants to transform it, and maybe save it. And this idea is interesting — to overcome, but not destroy, and maybe to make it normal, maybe beautiful, maybe find a hidden side of it. That is the Dionysian perspective. That is why I think Dionysian Logos is very important, practically speaking. We should seek it. Modernity is good, but it is not enough.

N: Thus you are looking for a kind of balance between the Logoi, for them to all work in harmony.

D: Now (the Cybelian age), this is a normal situation that should be changed. But maybe this abnormality as well has some meaning. I'm not against it, I'm not against modernity. I'm for the fight against modernity. I don't question the reason for modernity to be. I think this is proven by the contest.

N: Exactly, by opposing it you march against history. This then begs the question, why was the historical choice made to embrace the Cybelian Logos again?

D: Because it could be embraced. This decision or choice of the Logos of Cybele was possible and existed in virtual reality. But this Logos was overcome before by the previous decision of the Latins and Christians. So, the idea is not to annihilate it; the idea is to overcome it. In our Russian imperialistic vision the idea is not to destroy the enemy, but to make the enemy a part of ourself, to include them in the empire. We need to make them citizens and they will be good. This is a kind of imperial version. It is more Dionysian than Apollonian. Apollonian Logos is more about destroying people. And Apollo was punished in hell for destroying the serpent. Dionysus would behave differently. He certainly wouldn't let the serpent rule and he fought against the Titans and giants and he was tortured. But in his fight there is a martyrdom as well. And there is a kind of salvation for the Titans because he saved some Titans or at least their

descendants; that is, men. And because Dionysus gave his life for the descendants of the Titans, men got the possibility to become gods. It's a Greek Orphic tradition.

We trundle on and it seems to me that I can faintly see the lights of Moscow far away on the horizon. Alex states that he wishes to abolish the Cartesian subject as the norm in international affairs. And we begin to discuss the political applications of the Logoi.

N: These are very interesting theories, but what are their practical implications? For example, following the Dionysian Logos: how will people work, how will they live?

D: The difference and separation between practice and theory is purely materialistic from a Dionysian point of view. So, it shouldn't be a problem. For example, there is a very well known French sociologist called Louis Dumont, who is more or less to the left and certainly not a partisan of the far right or national socialism. He once made a very interesting remark, he said 'The Liberals were absolutely possessed by economic theory. They put it into practice and gained good results. The communists were absolutely possessed by economic theory. They developed it, and put it into practice and achieved not so great, but still good results. The National Socialists didn't have any economic theory at all, but in ten years they achieved such success in their economy by only playing on the psychological level. So for them, mass psychology was more important than economic theory.'

N: But that psychology also encouraged them to engage in a disastrous war which then ruined their economy.

D: Yes, that was the other side of that. But what is important is that for seven years up to 1939 they achieved such fantastic economic results, that in just seven years Germany became a world leading power capable of conquering all of Europe and fighting two wars with liberals who were obsessed with economics.

N: And yet despite this, the liberal economies of the US and UK ultimately proved to be stronger, as they were able to provide the finance needed to win the war.

D: Maybe, but still in seven years having no idea how to manage the economy they achieved fantastic results. Louis Dumont didn't say it was the best. He just pointed out that you could achieve mediocre results being obsessed as a communist or good results being obsessed as a liberal, but comparable results could also be achieved with no concern at all. So, in my opinion, these points should be explained to people.

Moscow's notorious (and enormous) traffic queues greet us as we near the famed city in the wee hours of the morning. Undaunted by this, our conversation turns to historical interpretation.

N: It seems to me, that sometimes you tend to just pick and choose your periods of history to suit your argument.

D: Ok, for example, I tried to say that in Russian history we had two periods that were very problematic and disastrous. Peter the Great was the first, and the second was the Soviet period. I don't think we should exclude them, but we should interpret them correctly.

N: That is rather curious that these are arguably the two most studied periods of Russian history in England.

D: That is interesting, but you say that an event/period was great or maybe not, and it's possible because history is meaning, it's not effect. It is a relation, attitude and interpretation of facts. History is a sequence of meanings. And you can always change history. One history is not made for all. History is a living thing. It's like a melody; if you finish it with one chord, it's one melody, if you finish with a different chord, then it is another melody. This is harmony. And this continues up to the end of time. History is open and returns to the consequence of meanings are possible. And it is possible to accentuate certain things, to combine aspects differently, to create different figures. There is no serious 'because of'. There are no linear causal effects, or line of history. It is not a physical process; it is a spiritual process. So 'You' decide, 'You' choose, 'You' prefer, 'You' reject, 'You' accept something and these are not causal effects. This is a much more ample approach. It is the study of the existential sequence of things. So, for example, this thalassocratic British Empire in our eyes is something dangerous, and not positive.

N: But, many people in Britain considered it positively…

D: Ok, and maybe that is absolutely right and we are wrong. But it's up to you to revise, rethink, but not to change in order to please us — I mean it in no way. According to Carl Schmitt, it was a Katehon, but not holy. A kind of empire of the Antichrist.

N: In what way?

D: Based on capitalism, materialism, individualism, and not accepting the holy seeds of Rome. Carl Schmitt was Catholic, so in that sense it was a negative Katehon. But I think we have a kind of hope in England with Prince Charles. Prince Charles, according to this friend of mine, the Princess of Sicily, has very very similar thoughts to ourselves about traditionalism and return to identity. He is surrounded by people who are followers of Henry Corbin and Guénon. And the princess said that in his youth he was a very light minded person but with age he's growing very wise.

N: But he might not be king.[20] There is talk that he might be passed over, and that the crown will go straight to William.

D: Yes, well, we will see. But, having such a person as head of the monarchy might provide some interesting possibilities.

As we edge closer to the centre, we reflect upon our time in the monastery and yet rather disconcertingly we are yet again drawn into a geopolitical discussion.

D: The majority of Russian monasteries are not like that. They are quite formal I would say.

N: Yes, and you would think that humility would perhaps be the basic principle of all monasteries. But I suspect that is not always the case…

D: Not the case, there are many corrupt ones, for example, where they treat rich people one way and poor people another way. But this is not everywhere, it depends. I think that the one we visited is one of the excellent examples of what a monastery should be.

N: Yes, in Europe they've got a lot of good monasteries around, but they are quite often full of tourists.

D: I think in general the Russian population has a more sacred feeling for monasteries and holy places.

N: If true, that is commendable. I was rather impressed with an Easter mass I once attended at St Isaac's Cathedral in St Petersburg. It's one of your great cathedrals and the atmosphere felt very holy.

D: Yes, and there was a great fight between liberals and the Church, and unfortunately the Church lost. And speaking of the monastery, it is interesting that Pavel, who we met there, was banned by the US for attending various events of mine. He, like me, is now under US sanction. But this is rather funny because Pavel has never been outside of Russia. So, I'm not sure it has such a big impact on him.

N: Well, you are certainly more internationally focused than Pavel. How do these sanctions impact your day to day life?

D: For example, I was supposed to receive money for my speech (and article) in Amsterdam, but that globalist NGO Nexus had to make the transaction through Deutsche Bank to Russia and the Americans received that transaction and didn't let it pass to Russia. So these sanctions are American but they work outside of America.

N: So even though you are not under EU sanction, your payments are still affected in the EU?

D: They control everywhere via SWIFT. I could easily have an account and travel in the EU. There was a German Green Party that tried to put me under sanctions — they were a Soros organisation — and the Bundestag formally refused to do so because I had not committed any crime. This demonstrated the liberty of the EU to judge by themselves. They did put some Russian bankers automatically under sanctions following America's lead, but in my case they said there wasn't enough reason to do so. And I had no problem in receiving a British visa and Schengen visa. I could travel easily.

N: So, the US were able to affect your financial activity in the EU and prevent your travel to the US. Was there anything else they could do?

D: Yes, they prohibited the selling of my books on Amazon.

N: Really? Because you can still buy them on Amazon.co.uk.

D: Yes, but not in the US. It is interesting that this act increased the sales of my books. And so my American publishers said we are very happy with this prohibition — they made a kind of propaganda about it and they sold more copies.

N: But they haven't stopped you from appearing on American YouTube programmes like InfoWars?

D: No, but they tried; they accused Alex Jones of being a Russian spy.

N: Do you think they will lift the sanctions any time soon?

D: I have no idea.

N: Have you made any efforts to persuade them?

D: No, I think I'm pretty happy with them.

N: But materially they are affecting you?

D: But I don't have any money there.

N: But, they do still affect you financially, for example, you said that they took money from you for your speech in Amsterdam.

D: If the Americans steal USD 500 from me I think it's a kind of premium; it's a pity but not fatal. Money is not so important, not because I have much of it but it's just not a deadly loss. And I enjoy this injustice as a confirmation of my correct position.

N: I remember you said during our first discussion that it is Christian to forgive, but on the other hand, as Nietzsche said, to recompense evil with good is too cruel because it humiliates the other. Which approach are you taking with the US on this matter?

D: Yes, for example, Father Vladimir can take a purely Christian approach. But, in my case it would be pure hypocrisy to do so, it would make me a bad Christian. Rather, I prefer the Nietzschean approach. But there was a very beautiful tale in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* that the return of evil should be small. If you respond with the same, you pay too much attention. There is a person in Russia who has hated me for thrity-five years, Sergey Kurginyan. He's a lefty, liberal, patriot, pro-American, Russophobic, Stalinist. And from the end of the 80s he thought that I was the worst guy in the world, with no reason at all. We dealt with each other normally when together, but when he was alone with his audience he would repeat the same thing, that everything that I do is wrong and dangerous. And he's already changed positions many times, from liberalism to communism, from communism to nationalism. But I'm still and safe. And he's absolutely furious because I don't respond to him.

N: Father Vladimir seems to be very interested in politics. I mean quite often priests are detached from the real world, but he seems to be rather engaged in it.

D: That is almost the rule for Orthodox fathers; they have to be engaged. Not only in politics but in the real world. Not in the details but they have to know which positions to take and most of them are politically right or radically right, nationalists, traditionalists, even Stalinists; the majority of fathers are Stalinists. There was an idea that he attended seminary, and he opened monasteries and churches during the war.

N: That sounds rather bizarre, as Stalin is famous for brutally persecuting many priests.

D: Yes, I agree. But he's great, and he made the country great and it's a very sensitive question in Russia, including for Orthodox. In a rational way it is a bit strange. However, it may be explained as a hatred of the liberals. Because what the pro-Western elite of the 90s said was a total disaster for the image of liberalism. Because in the name of liberalism they stole everything. That was a very mean way to say that we are for liberty, we are for human rights, and then to rob people. And the hatred of the people is so great, that they will accept everything, and forget all the crimes of communism. And that is interesting. The cult of Stalin is a new thing. It wasn't a tradition or cult before that. It's new and it's common for people who mostly know nothing about Stalin and who have no family relations alive from his era. It is a purely negative reaction. It is opposition to the West and a kind of Katehon based on his sacrifice for the empire.

N: Have they been told about Stalin's crimes? In London they mention it constantly.

D: The criticism of Stalin was made by liberals. That was the reason we started to glorify him. Liberals are a kind of Satan in our society. If they criticise Stalin, that is enough to validate him for us.

N: But what if one takes a more objective and detached approach and deals solely with the facts — Stalin won the war, Stalin saved the country, Stalin killed a lot of his own people. These are just facts. That is not Western or liberal, and not a political judgement.

D: They say Westerners were spies, Troskyists and saboteurs.

N: What about the purges, the famine, the Holodomor — all those Ukrainians who died?

D: Because they were for the Nazis. This is not my explanation. But everything can be explained.

N: But the Holodomor took place before Hitler had invaded the Soviet Union and even before he was appointed Chancellor. Stalin was in full charge at the time of this event and is surely accountable for the death of his own people. There doesn't seem to be much grounds for blaming the West here.

D: They say maybe they were not so much our people. Maybe they were spies. They also say, 'We needed Stalin to kill all these liberals'.

N: That seems a rather extreme interpretation. The English historical approach tends to balance things. For example, here we have a king, these were his merits and these

were his faults, and then we make a conclusion. In Russia you don't seem to take such a balanced approach.

D: Because we are too extremist. For example, we passed from criminalising any kind of socialism or liberalism during the Tsar's time to criminalising all the Tsar's time. And then after that, with liberalism, we criminalised everything we've got. So, finally, we hate one another. For example, when liberals criticise communists, they bare their teeth. When communists criticise or mock liberals, it's the same case. Tsar Nicholas II is considered to be a Saint by the Orthodox Church and this is respected. But because he lost the war, he is conceived as being too weak and too hesitant in the eyes of the people. So he was a false Tsar, while Stalin was considered to be a real Tsar as he won the war.

N: I have noticed that there is now an attempt to humanise Tsar Nicholas II in popular culture. I saw a film called *Matilda,* which is about him and his relationship with a ballerina.

D: Yes, but in the case of a saint it is a bit inappropriate to humanise him and pervert his image. Humanising him is precisely the opposite of what the Church wants.

N: And where do you personally stand, are you a fan of Stalin?

D: No. He destroyed the peasants. Maybe, for me, killing is not so important as it was a part of our history. But the destruction of the peasantry, the modernisation of Russia, the creation of the proletariat out of the peasants, those I consider to be great social and cultural crimes.

N: And his aggressive atheism?

D: Well, yes. But as to the atheism of the Bolsheviks, that was a difficult thing. Because there was a kind of immanent religion — very much Cybelian — but it was not materialism, it was materialist religion. It was something Satanic that is different from pure materialism. It was a kind of obsession with matter. And solutions to matter was a kind of cult. And I consider that to be a heterodoxy of the Russian people's understanding of religion, Christianity and messianism. That was very idealistic at its core, but not Marxist. Marxism was used as it was before Christianity in pagan peasant society. It was reinterpreted and not atheist in the real sense. It was more realistic than liberalism. From my point of view — the destruction of the peasantry, the destruction of tradition, the face of progress, industrialisation and the destruction of the villages — that is catastrophic. And this was not done by Lenin, but only by Stalin. So I consider him a terrible, horrible figure. However, in order not to enrage society too much, I prefer not to talk about that. That's my opinion, I don't change it. But because the people who adore Stalin normally hate globalism and liberalism, I tolerate them a bit. But I think they are naive and completely wrong. However, the antonyms of Stalin are worse. Now I have to keep a lot of topics to myself; I was much more free in the 90s. During Yeltsin's time I could say this is completely wrong, I could show disrespect to anything

the government was doing, I didn't have any legitimacy from Yeltsin or liberals and I was free to expose my sincere convictions. With Putin it becomes more and more reduced. Because I don't want to be accused of hating something because the same things are criticised by those I hate more. But there is no such problem if I am speaking outside of Russia. I concentrate more on this now. I write in Russian and my books are published here in Russian first, and that worked, but I'm a bit out of tempo, out of rhythm.

N: So, you say different things to a Russian audience than to what you say to an English, Turkish or Chinese audience, for example?

D: No, I concentrate in these places on things that have no audience here, but that are important for me personally. I think that here, while not ideal, we have a much better situation than outside. The people around Putin, quite convinced pro-Hillary outside globalists with no responsibility, are much worse than liberalism or globalism. In the West there is a kind of tradition of this, a kind of responsibility, but ours is purely imitation. So, for example, for us liberalism is the right to steal with no accountability or punishment. That is only half of liberalism. So when it comes to the question of responsibility, they cry for social protection and so on. This is communist opportunist revisionism that uses liberalism and discredits it absolutely; it is a kind of simulacrum. Russian liberalism is much worse than Western liberalism because there is no logic to it in post-Soviet Russia. There is logic to it in the West. I think the majority of the people around Putin, who stay close to him in power, are worse than any.

N: Are you talking about people like Lavrov, for instance?

D: No, it's impossible for Lavrov. Lavrov is a functionary, a diplomat. He is overestimated because Putin wants it to be so. Everything that Lavrov does is a pure transmission of Putin's will. It is pure function. And Putin is surrounded by functionaries and liberals. A functionary could not rule the country; Putin is not a functionary. And with liberals, that would be a catastrophe. So I'm very pessimistic about that situation. But it is based on logical analysis.

N: What do you think about the title that American liberals have given you, 'Putin's Rasputin'?

D: The interesting thing is that Americans are finally a little bit rational. They see that my thought more or less corresponds to the deeds of Putin. And I predicted in the 1990s that many concrete decisions would be made by Putin. So they've just put together two things: my rational plan and Putin's political deeds. They coincide more than with any other political analyst, and more than any other writer, philosopher, analyst or expert. So, they infer that I influence Putin. Because without that, it's unexplainable. And they tried to prove that and they are immediately in the maze of the unknown of the Russian state. They say so many different things about everybody, about me, themselves, about Putin, that it's almost crazy, it's Kafkaesque. Including in the FSB and the Special

Services — you can tell anything about everybody here. There is a total loss of mind. When they collected together all the contradictory versions of mine and Putin's relations from the concrete information of agents, it was too chaotic. So, they put it aside and returned to the previous formula 'from thought to political deeds' and thus considered me an 'evil brain'. They should base their decision on this info gathered by us, but they say 'Ahh, it's stupid', because it does not correspond with anything and has no rhyme or reason. And so they have arrived at this nickname. I spoke a few days ago with a Georgian girl from Columbia University and she said that they study my works from the beginning in the first year of International Relations regarding Russia. And I asked if I'm presented in a very negative way. And she said, 'No, not at all, because it is not journalism. And, for example, we are reading Brzezinski. In journalism we would blame him immediately. But in university we just explain what Brzezinski said'. I was very astonished by that. And she said no, they just explained my position with different commentaries, not always positive, but in general they do not blame. This is a kind of consternation. She said that that field of research is almost unique. And finally they realise that the only way to understand Putin is to read my texts. Things do not always coincide, but very often they do. So, I think it's a computer's decision about Rasputin, and not based on any kind of analysis.

N: Do you know Andrew Monaghan? He is quite a famous analyst on Russia in the UK and has links with Oxford University, Chatham House and NATO Defence College. He has written a book called *Power in Modern Russia*. I met him at a conference once and asked him what he thought of you, and he said that he doesn't think you have much influence in modern Russia. Rather he thinks that modern Russia is guided by purely pragmatic considerations.

D: Maybe, but that is in England. In America they have different thoughts.

N: Do you consider geopolitics to be a science?

D: Yes, but I think that science is unscientific because the only scientific science should be based on poetry. So, geopolitics is much more akin to myth and poetry than to the other side, which is more scientific in fact.

N: And what about the common objection that geopolitics is troublesome because it often creates the situations it was trying to avoid? For example, Hitler invaded the Soviet Union in order to achieve Karl Haushofer's idea of Lebensraum and secure German prosperity. But this decision ultimately proved catastrophic for Nazi Germany.

D: But, Haushofer was absolutely critical against this. And Hitler was not a geopolitician.

N: Maybe, but nevertheless Hitler seems to have used Haushofer's geopolitical strategies, as demonstrated above.

D: No, he didn't use them. Haushofer was close to Hitler in the beginning, but afterwards he was considered to be irrelevant and didn't influence him at all. Haushofer

wrote a famous article called 'The Continental Block Moscow-Berlin-Tokyo', which is completely against Hitlerism and very consequential for the Eurasian point of view. But Hitler didn't pay attention to that. For example, the explanation of geopolitical laws by Haushofer was very correct. That was a reflection of Mackinder. It's a kind of logical application of the same rules because Mackinder developed the concept of how to destroy Germany and Russia and how to prevent their alliance. Haushofer remarked that this was good for our enemies, so let us do precisely what they don't want us to do. It is the same with Eurasianism. It is a pure mirror of Atlanticism. It is not something original. For example, we are reading how they can encircle the World Island in Eurasia, by Brzezinski and Mackinder, and we are deciding not to let them do that. They want the Sea Power; we want the Land Power. And when we try to establish geopolitics based on the position of Land Power, we are blamed for being Nazis because we are exactly against being encircled. Really, that is the problem. If there is someone that resists your plans, he is the bad guy; it's normal. And Haushofer was a bad guy as well. He's blamed not because of the Nazis, but because he is an anti-globalist. He is an aggressive Other who doesn't want to accept domination by another; that is the basic logic. The thing is that all the fascists, except for Mussolini, came to the Americans and betrayed Mussolini, except the Salo Republic. The problem of geopolitics is not about being a Nazi; it could be Nazi or communist, but they are even worse than the Nazis. I think maybe there is a difference. Maybe as that Georgian girl mentioned there is an appreciation of my position in the US, for example at Columbia University.

N: I'm rather surprised that this happened at Columbia University, as it is known for being a very liberal university.

D: Yes, absolutely, maybe she exaggerated. But I was informed by a leading figure of the CIA concerning Russia that there are chief experts in Congress controlling the special service in Russia and specialists in Russian Kremlinology and they strongly advised to invite me to Washington in order to get the real understanding of what Russia is. And that was the position of all the American experts in Washington. He didn't know me and yet he invited me. I was very astonished by that. In 2005 I was invited to Johns Hopkins University — I visited Fukuyama and Brzezinski and there were twenty people there of very high position — chiefs of their departments speaking with me in a very friendly way. The audience in Johns Hopkins University was full, more than 200 people, I think. But I don't insist on that. I'm following my mission, my work and don't care too much about its reception. But I think that a reception from some opponents is better than from some friends.

N: And what about your university work, do you currently take on PhD students?

D: No, when I worked at MGU (Moscow State University) I had some PhD students and I accepted one of them and he made a thesis on how Shia mysticism affects Iranian politics. It was a very nice thesis. And the other Phd student thesis was on an alternative

organisation of Eastern Europe in an anti-globalist way. It was a kind of prediction of many interesting processes. And it was five years ago when it all just began. And my thesis for my doctorate in sociology was dedicated to the sociology of imagination.

N: What were your conclusions?

D: That everything is imagined — everything. Because society is imagined. When society imagines something it begins to be reality. I explained how the imagination works. There are three regimes of imagination: diurnal, nocturnal mystical and nocturnal dramatical. These are fascinating ideas which I've taken from Gilbert Durand. And I developed them and applied them to concrete society more than he himself did and I think this is very interesting. It provoked a great emotional response because finally everybody here is much more of a realist than a positivist. And they absolutely believe in the materialistic nature of everything. Working with sociology was for us a kind of bourgeois discipline, which had been newly introduced. And when I explained to the professors what Durkheim really meant they were very confused because they thought everything was related to material; that is, a very low quality of materialism without this historical dimension that is Marxism and a kind of individualism as well. That idea of society is imagination; it is not imagined but rather is imagination. Society imagines everything. So, it is not collective thought but collective imagination. According to Durkheim, society is the collective thought. According to Durand, society is collective imagination. Imagination proceeds thought, and it could turn to thought, or it could turn to a pure irrational and chaotic decision. But both of them are created by imagination. Imagination is the main productive force inside of society. And imagination is not artistic and not individual; it is society precisely. We are not free in our imagination because our imagination is defined by society. But if we manage to understand that, we liberate ourselves from this fixed version of it. And we could imagine ourselves in a revolution for example, or something alternative. That is a little bit of Marxism. It is the same with imagination but on a different level. First there is imagined reality, and after that they impose on us rules as reality.

N: Who imagines reality to begin with?

D: The society.

N: But who exactly is that?

D: According to Durkheim, the society is God. The collective identity, imagined as a kind of collective person of culture and society.

N: Is it dependent on anything?

D: It is not independent because imagination has laws. The imagination creates structures. And in projecting the structure or reality, it creates cities, objects, houses, etc.

N: But you need something to exist beforehand in order to create society. Surely something needs to be created first and then used in an imaginative way to create

society.

D: That is an ontological question. In a materialistic way there is something that exists and the imagination or the thought reflects something that already exists. But in Durand's or Henry Corbin's version, imagination is first, and not the objects. This is a little bit phenomenological. So, first of all there is an act of imagination, and afterwards there is a fixation of imagination.

N: So, society is subordinate and dependent only on a collective human imagination? But society is not so coherent and concrete; an individual's imagination can often be different to that of the society. You yourself are a good example of this.

D: No, individual imagination is secondary; it is dependent on the collective imagination. It isn't free precisely because it depends on the collective. This is Durkheim's main thesis, that we have no thoughts; society thinks and we only participate in the collective thought. This somewhat rational. These are a kind of rational structures. And, in my opinion, they are methodological structures.

This concludes my individual conversations with Mr Dugin during the summer period. However, I also observed some very interesting fireside chats and lectures at the monastery, which would be a pity not to include as they are illuminating on a number of valuable subjects. They are presented here below. Some of the interlocutors in the fireside chats are not named for reasons of privacy. For those eager to continue on with my individual conversations with Professor Dugin please skip directly to Chapter 4.

The First Fireside Chat

Man (M): What's with Iran?

D: The situation with Iran is interesting, they are in confrontation with the USA.

M: They are becoming our friends too.

D: Yes.

M: The same front is being established here too. And a conservative front is being established in Europe too.

D: That's right.

M: It is being supported by billionaires.

D: That's a good thing. Let me tell you about my travels this year. It was wonderful; we went to Karabakh from the Azeri side. We held an event there, met the soldiers. Dasha was the first to go, she is very brave. Everyone remembered her as an active lady. So we tried to balance it, it was a wonderful trip. I had a nice trip to Italy, I don't think I told you about it. Did I tell you about China? I'll talk about it later… You know I met Tony Blair's wife's sister in Mashhad, the cultural centre of Iran. She used to be a model but became a Muslim. She is very interesting. She is for the multipolar world, and the return of the spiritual tradition. She spoke at a conference that was organised by an Iranian journalist friend of mine. He is a friend of Oliver Stone. His son, Sean Stone, converted to Shia Islam. So there is a circle of famous people who are against the West

and globalisation, and for traditional values. There were a lot of American generals, colonels from the CIA at that conference. It turned out that they left the American government, disagreeing with their lies. So they sided with Putin, Iran, and the multipolar world. I liked them a lot, nice people. They are well known; they are not marginals. They took our side. Some of them do interviews on Russia Today and support Putin. They stand against globalisation, the American invasion, Israeli Zionism. There are many people who think like that. So, the West is not lost.

Father Vladimir (FV): There is inertial, expansive thinking (i.e. American-English) and there is free thinking. When a man is free, he wants to give freedom to everybody. When a man seeks power, he wants to get world power. But if he becomes free spiritually, like those generals, he wants everyone to be free: people, countries, nations, etc. On the one hand, it's utopian, on the other, it's the only way to help the world get out of the state in which it is now under the American and English influence, to live in accordance with one's own values, religion, mindset, philosophy. So there are two types: expansion, inertia. Education is the key. God up there created the world, so we are here alone by ourselves handling economics and politics. But God has lived in every heart in Russia, guiding every one of our movements, including politics. Life would be impossible without God, without his grace. We could not have dealt with the Tatars, Polish, French and German invasions without God's help. These are different mindsets, but they have to take each other into account. One can say that something is better. The Fourth Political Theory is just making its way, it has to prove its power and find people who support it. The biggest fight was between Russia and America, capitalism and socialism before, but now it's between globalist expansion and a multipolar world.

N: Do you think the multipolar world exists now?

FV: Of course, it does.

N: But in what state is it and how do you understand it? Because it seems to me that there is not yet a widespread and deep understanding of multipolarity and how to carry it out practically. China and India, for example, are still primarily interested in economics, technology, and trade and not so much in the deeper philosophical and spiritual construction of the world.

FV: It is the same thing with man. His practical goals are to earn money, buy things, eat food, etc. But if a man sets these things as his main goal, he is not a human anymore, he becomes anti-human. The theory of multipolarity gives freedom on a personal level, as well as on a governmental level and on a national level. It allows us to save our traditions, religions and mindsets because they are all different. Alexander describes them all, and their attitude to the divine world. They are different. Imposing one view is not an option, like the USSR and the West did, or rather are still trying to do. The USSR collapsed, the shell was shattered, but the core remained. Dostoyevsky called it

worldwide responsiveness and unity. It's the main philosophy. You cannot take humanity part by part, tearing it apart piece by piece. Christianity split apart into Orthodoxy, Catholicism, and Protestantism. Still, there's got to be a utopia, an idea, a dream, a perfect image. Like it was when Christ came and offered an ideal way of life. That's the most important thing in this world: Christ and his ideal way to salvation, to eternity. Some people stopped following it because they lost their way in the darkness. But it can be cured.

N: How?

FV: By God's grace, first of all, and by people's efforts. It's called synergy when human and divine energies mix together. When God responds to a person's freedom, and a person guides his freedom to God, responding to the good news that Christ brought.

N: One of the problems with multipolarity is, if you accept and allow Western values to continue to develop, then certain countries/civilisations which don't follow them, technologically and economically will fall behind and could fall prey to the unscrupulous countries who have followed them. How can multipolarity respond to such a question?

FV: Well, it's simple. We use all the West's achievements, but we don't want them to be the only reason to live, the great cause of living.

N: That doesn't really solve the geopolitical problem of technology and the economy still defining who the strongest nations are and allowing them to subjugate the weaker ones who don't follow these values as has happened numerous times throughout history. And addressing your point directly, the thing is that it is very easy for the majority of people (particularly for Westerners but even those in the East, like the Chinese and Japanese) to look for the meaning of life in material things. Some spiritual and intellectual people in these places can do what you suggest, but it requires great effort and contemplation and the rewards are not often obvious or immediate. Whereas attraction to technology, to a new toy or gadget is primal and easy and appeals to everyone from the Western CEO to an Amazonian tribal leader. So, again, how can multipolarity respond to the continuing dominance of these Western values?

FV: Only with God's help.

N: Of course, but how do we know what God wants? How do you know he wants the multipolar world to exist or even flourish?

FV: He explained everything in the Bible.

N: I don't remember the multipolar world being mentioned in the Bible. But, I suppose it depends on how you interpret it.

FV: The Gospel is not an interpretation…

N: What about the differences between Orthodox and Catholics…

FV: The differences are not that big.

N: What about Jews and Christians or Christians and Muslims?

FV: That's a different thing. In a nutshell, the world is divided into those who are for Jesus Christ and those who are against him. That's the main crack. Technologies and science that become the only reason for life are against Jesus Christ. Planes, iPads, cars are just means, but not the reason.

M: Most of the people have love in their hearts to something not material and they just use what they have. They don't focus on economic benefits, but they are not so religious either. They just live their lives. There is something inside of them that makes them reach for each other. For my peers, it is important to have friends and people who understand them. So there was just one Jesus Christ, but there are so many religions. Who needs this separation?

FV: Well, there were twenty brothers. They left their father and went away. Later they decided to come back. But each one of them had his own idea about how to get back. The father lived on the mountaintop. So they started climbing on the different sides of the mountain. The wish to be with him was different too. But there is only one centre for everyone, for all of us, Catholics, Protestants, Orthodox. It is our Holy Father Jesus Christ. But we have different ways to him like you would take different paths to reach the top of Mount Everest. These ways are all difficult in their own way; one is better, another is faster, another is less tragic.

M: Why is Islam more strict then? They treat it with more trepidation, they can die for their religion. While Christians may not even believe in theirs. There is no such thing in Islam when someone believes or not.

FV: Islam is a simplified religion, ours is more complex. We have the Divine Trinity, Jesus Christ, 2000-year-old traditions, Holy Fathers, sacraments, services, Byzantine culture, and Russian culture. It's simple there: if you die in war, you go to heaven, you can have three wives, the rest can be your concubines. It's something that the people of Arabia could understand. They had 500 wives who gave birth to the ancestors of the sultan, and who later fought with each other. It's simplified. In order to go to Heaven you pray five times a day toward Mecca, you fast, and you go to a mosque. The ban on having many wives worked out the opposite way, so there were billions of them. Still, they have moral principles, like a lack of abortions, as well as courage and faithfulness to their religion. We can learn a few things from them because we have some weak spots. Christianity is not for nervous people, because the hardest thing is when there is God's revelation about himself when there is Christ's sacrifice for all mankind. Our God loves each person most of all. We have to love everybody too, including people of different religions and nationalities, as well as our enemies. It's very hard not to get angry, not to judge, to put up with everything, to thank God for everything, to serve God in your own position to which you've been assigned. Our religion is the most difficult one for the mind, heart, soul, and will. We think that Catholicism is easier, but in fact it is not so much. Read about St Mary. You have sacraments, services, traditions.

Protestantism is a devastation with their denominations. There is Further Mathematics, Mathematics, Arithmetic, and ability to count. The way to God is hard as it is. You should be a slave, love your enemies…

N: One of the problems of the compromise between technology and religion was highlighted earlier when Alexander and I were discussing how to get to the monastery. We could either go by tractor or walk through the forest. Now, walking ten kilometres through the thick forest and fighting off those large biting insects is no doubt more spiritual. But in the end, we decided on the tractor just because it was easier. So, that's the problem. You said we can use technology and it won't spoil our souls. But, of course, it will because suffering is at the heart of Christianity — we worship and follow the crucified Christ. And technology serves principally to help us alleviate or avoid suffering. Herein lies the conflict.

FV: So the choice is to get the cross and go with Christ, or buy an iPad.

N: But the modern way is to do both. For example, most people here are just staying for two to three days because they have a life outside in the modern secular world. Multipolarity is just continuing the easy life.

FV: No, each nation will confess their values without outer influence. England won't blame us that we poisoned someone with 'Novichok'. When a person lives inside his culture, it is easier to reach out to God.

N: But embracing technology means living universally as you are embracing this universal principle that technology is the backbone of modern life.

FV: One thing is using it, the other is when it becomes the reason for living. Our elder, who lived here, used to sit in front of the bridge and didn't greet people who rode horses, but he blessed people who walked. Our religion makes us suffer, but suffering leads to nothing. Of course, everything is suffering, including going to work and brushing teeth. You just have to get the right job, the one you love. Even if so, there are people at work who don't like you and want to take your place. You cannot evade problems. It's just that a Christian's attention is focused on simple love. When you love people around you, you get hurt anyway. If you say you've never suffered…

M: I didn't say that. I just don't understand why I have to suffer all the time.

Man 2 (M 2): It's impossible, there is always time to sleep, to eat, to read…

M: You can be happy too, God said we should be cheerful. It's just how it works. We make ourselves suffer on our own.

N: Christ said that we should take up our cross and follow Him, and that he who tries to save his life will lose it, but he who loses his life for His sake will be saved. Therefore, one should be ready to suffer. We live in a fallen world, among fallen people with their own opinions. Suffering is not the meaning of life. But you can suffer with meaning for the sake of Christ. It can be an honour to suffer. Like the Christian martyrs who suffered and died for Christ's sake.

FV: Christ is not going to ask if one suffered, he is going to ask if one loved…

D: There is a notion, that when elders eat, they say that they console themselves after suffering. I wrote a part of my book about Gypsy Logos. They are interesting people; we don't know them at all.

M: Are we afraid of them?

D: Yes, that they are going to steal our children.

M: Cast a spell on them!

D: Yes… They have a tradition. The general idea (philosophy) is that they don't own anything including their own territory, government, or religion. And this is unlike any other nation. But they thank God that they have an ability to be happy like no other nation. They don't possess anything, but they can enjoy life. Multipolarity is how different nations arrange their cultures. Some choose government, some choose serving, some choose to suffer, some choose to be happy. One can sacrifice a lot. We may not understand the values of the others. We think that only a fool could choose to be cheerful all the time. Others wouldn't understand how you can choose a way of suffering, or choose to worship a God who failed, who was crucified. It's important not to impose on others one's mindset: technology, suffering, relief, or indifference in Buddhism. The bad thing is not a value itself, but when it crosses borders. When Gypsies have fun, it's okay, but when they try to get others involved, it's where they should be stopped. Technology is good, but when it becomes aggressive…when people start to think that a person can't be a person without an iPhone, it's too much. There is a border, I think. We think that all people are like Russians. We think that everyone who is not like the Russian is a little worse off. That's a usual thing for us, but that's not a right thing. We criticise the West, but we should think about ourselves. It's the wrong approach when we judge others and compare them with ourselves, and we say this religion is better, while others are worse. Everyone is different. Some dance, some use iPods, but they should leave us alone too. We have our own faith…

M: Some young men visited us yesterday, they study marketing and they told us about branding.

D: This is crazy! This is Satanism.

M: Yes, when you are guided to buy something and forced to buy something or do something.

D: That's what capitalism is. Everything is 'goods' now. That's the last form of alienation.

M: Let's pray for them, so they can change when they meet the priest.

D: Let them do something good in their profession.

M: Alexander, how did it change your life when you met Yevgeny Golovin? Could you call it a touch of God? Was it this that gave us Mr. Dugin as we know him?

D: Well, I owe a lot of people: Zhenya, Geidar, Yuri Vitalyevich. They are not with us anymore. I owe to thinkers that formed me. I'm just an executor of some tasks. I'm being sincere. Lots of thinkers gave me a task to understand at least something. So, I wouldn't pay much attention to anything else except this. I can't name the exact moment. In fact, there is much less of humanity in a person than we think. Not much depends on us. That's what God's will is. It is in everyone. Individuality is completely wrong, I hate it in myself and in others. It's a false thing. One should follow the mission that he acquires from the people he meets, books, thoughts, traditions, events…The right thing is to treat yourself as a tiny letter or a comma, like a part of everything we encounter. That's what's right. Zhenya had a lot of followers, but they all fell apart and nobody develops his line. Many people lose their followers. I met Martin Heidegger's student Friedrich-Wilhelm von Herrmann, who said that Heidegger used to have a lot of students, but they disappeared. But there are followers of him in Russia and China. I visited China recently. Heidegger and Schmitt are the two main thinkers there. It's amazing! They translated two volumes of Heidegger where each phrase is accompanied by Chinese commentary. Everybody meets interesting people and comes across interesting ideas. It's important to understand that all the people we meet are important and interesting. Two or three books are really important. The rest of the 97% are useless. It's important to choose the right ones. The same is with people. This has influenced me a lot. At some point I didn't know anything, but later I knew something. I was nobody before I met these people. Then I became a small part of this world. It was an anti-world in the USSR and it was something heroic. Even now it is heroic. All these books and authors are partly translated by us. So, what? Everyone talks about branding. It was almost impossible to find spiritual literature back then. It was heroism.

M: So you were a teenager, a school boy, a student back then. How did you get into all those ideas? How did you become one of them?

D: That's a good question. I lived in a simple Soviet family that didn't teach me anything, I didn't have any background…

M: Still, everyone is unique, and you say individuality is bad…

D: It is. But a Russian man is a different thing. Russians are different too. Well, let me answer the question. The most important thing for me was the denial of the world I lived in. It was basic. Eternal emptiness was filled eventually. If it wasn't there, it could've been left unnoticed. It was my inner request. It's more valuable than when you get something. When you feel that you lack something (or you have nothing at all), you really value the things you finally get. When you have options, you don't value them. It's different when you can feel the emptiness. The second thing is that we live in a world where something Russian is completely pressed like a spring. Everybody has been getting at us for centuries. We've been destroyed as a nation. There are two options. Either we make the last effort or disappear as a nation. I believe in the Russian people

the most. Now we have the last chance to get out of an almost vanished state, or we will be replaced by something. I believe that it won't happen. We have to do it now or else. I feel the responsibility as a part of the nation. It's not just me. People speak through me. I don't like this word 'me'; it's wrong. Only God can say it. We need to find a more modest pronoun for ourselves, because it's impudent. Russian people are powerful, and you can feel it when it speaks through us. It is an oppressed, hidden power, like God's love. It is Russian might. To wake it up and give shape to it, to make it think and speak is the mission of our generation, and not of an individual. We have to grab whatever takes us closer to this goal. We can't miss a single clever thought. It's incredible. If you post an important thought on Facebook, you get five or six likes. If you post something stupid, you get a full-scale discussion and hundreds of shares. But we always miss the important things and pay attention to something unimportant. We need to pay attention to important things.

M: The tragedy is that in order to make clay take on a new form you have to throw it on a table. And it can be formed not in favour of us, but in favour of people who have formed themselves. You speak about Russian chaos. It can turn into church persecution and denial of everything. So Russian people have to lose their form, and recoil to get rid of the chaos.

D: I don't agree, I think Russian chaos is a very interesting thing. It's not a simple mess.

M: It's not a simple mess, right. But people can't feel Orthodoxy or things that will help them get up off their knees.

D: It's up to God.

M: Yes, God will always be with the Russian people. But what are the ways Russian people can get back to God?

D: Who knows? We have to do whatever we can. We'll see how it goes. But Russians are something wonderful. Everybody notices it (positive and negative things).

M: I'm certain that you and your ideas and lectures influenced the modern generation a lot. Many of my friends listen to your lectures very often. They are very interesting. Some take your ideas as a joke, but they still think about what you are really saying, they think about it, they are influenced by it. It gives answers.

D: Wonderful.

M: Let me get back to my thought. It's going to be a call to God from people who feel alone, who have experienced everything. They are on the edge of the abyss. They need wings to fly over it. But this call needs a tool that will let it get a form. People are searching, but they fail to find anything.

D: They will. There was an ancient Russian rule that a husband can be saved by a good wife and good children — and vice versa. It's an ideological conflict. It's good when there is someone who is religious in the family.

M: Serafim of Sarov told me that if a wife takes communion, the whole family is blessed no matter if a husband is baptised or not.

D: How nice. You can save a lot.

M2: When I come to a Russian church it's always dark and depressing, when I go to a Catholic church it's bright and the atmosphere is light. Why is it so? You can just come, sit and think. Why don't the Orthodox have a bright monastery?

Man 3 (M 3): You haven't been to the right one.

M2: I've been to a lot of them. The old ones are especially depressing.

M3: You should visit our church in the morning.

M2: Plus, I don't like old ladies who scare you away.

M3: They are guardians of the gate.

M2: They should help if they are so religious.

M3: It's the first trial.

M2: They are like demons…

D: Father Dmitry Smirnov told me how he fought such ladies. If he heard any of them being rude to someone, he would stop the service and talk to them harshly. We think that there is going to be no end to old ladies, but it's going to come eventually.

M: Our children will become grandmas.

D: They may not turn into them.

M: We don't have them here.

M3: Their time hasn't come.

D: But they can be guardians of traditions; for example, during Khruschev's period. But, there are different approaches to these rules. Father Ierinarkh invites absolutely everyone and his church has very strict rules. But even if you don't follow the rules, nobody tells you off about it. They have five-hour-long services there. And uninterested people become the most loyal to the church. Unlike him, Father Pyotr doesn't let anyone in. So there are two traditions. There is an ideological conflict about who does the right thing. There are only a couple of people at his services. So there is a big quarrel over who is right in terms of *Akrivia* and *Economia*[21] . Father Pyotr supports Akrivia (meaning strictness), where you have to know everything beforehand. Father Ierinarkh treats people like they are from kindergarten and his church is packed, while barely a single person comes to Father Pyotr's church. So, there are two schools of thought. I think that multipolarity is not about choosing between them. You shouldn't judge anyone, including babushkas. I'm on Father Ierinarkh's side because so many people are saved. But, some Eurasianist people try to persuade me that Father Pyotr is right. You get into details there. It's impossible to forget the rules thanks to such people (including babushkas).

M: There is a saying that if you were baptised yesterday, you are holier than the Pope.

D: Yes, that's clear.

FV: Well, it's true for some time.

D: Well, many people become sinners after dozens of years of being saints. If you are Russian you're usually somewhere in the middle. After twenty years one may commit a terrible sin. I think the right way is to follow one path until the day you die. Even if it's a small aim. I used to get mad while driving, for example. I approached a priest and told him about it. I asked for his advice. He told me not to get mad. Since then I stopped doing it. It's easier when we aim for something small. But you can't go below that. Russians seem to change their minds along the way. We aim for something high. We refuse to eat and drink. It's harder to keep that way for a long time. One should take care of his family and so on. But people lose their interest and start doing bad things again. We can't do anything step by step. Russians are wonderful people, but we lack order. The monk Silouan the Athonite said that one should keep his mind in hell[22] and never get upset.

Thus concluded our first fireside chat. Presented here below is the first lecture Professor Dugin gave at the monastery.

The Logos of India

D: Father Vladimir said that we forgot about the Indian Logos last time. So, let's talk about it today. There are two ethnic components in Indian culture. There are many ethnicities and hundreds of languages there. But there are two types that predetermine the complexity of Indian culture. Everything we know about India (Sanskrit language, the Vedas — spiritual texts, religious models, philosophical ideas) was brought there by Indian predecessors from Turan, Eurasian territory. They were nomads from the Indo-European group, close to Iranians, Slavs, Balts, Latins, Greeks, Germans, and Celts. Indians are part of that Indo-European cultural family. The Sanskrit language (and languages like Prakrit, which are based on it) has Indo-European roots, close to Slavic, German, and Iranian languages. It's a classical Indo-European language. Hindus had a common religion with Iran during the Indo-Iranian commonwealth. They had a lot of common gods, conceptions, and principles. It is thought that it was a single religion that divided when the Hindus and Iranians turned from nomadic to settled people.

There was a lot of nomadic culture in the ancient Vedas (Rig Vedas). This nomadic culture was alive among the Indo-European people in Turan (Scythians and Sarmatians — the modern Ossetians). The modern Ossetians, Afghan Pashtuns, and some Pakistani nomadic tribes are descendants of that nomadic culture that brought the first settlers to Iran and India. Celtic, Germanic, Slavic, Greek, and Latin people separated from them even earlier. All these people came from Eurasia — the territory of the Great Prairie

that we call Russia today. The birthplace of Indo-European peoples is on our territory (the Russian Empire and the USSR and partly Kazakhstan too).

The Great Prairie begins in Southern Siberia (Omsk) or even Mongolia and ends in Transylvania and Pannonia. This huge territory had no forests and was a pasture. The predecessors of the Indo-Europeans, Hindus, and Iranians were chasing herds there. Eventually they created their own culture. There were interesting values in that culture. The first one was the *sky* because those people saw only the sky. The land wasn't that important. It was the same everywhere. They didn't cultivate the land. They didn't get an idea that there was something underneath it. It was like asphalt to them. There is no underground dimension in their mythology. In fact, it appeared later. There is no mention of the underworld in this ancient culture. There was no hell for them. Death meant returning to the sky where you came from. Male Sun gods who had father-son relations lived in the sky. They had the vertical system of hierarchy with three castes: priests (Brahmans), warriors (Kshatriya), and cattle-breeders (Vaishya). These castes are preserved in all Indo-European societies. They can be found in Plato's 'State': keepers, their helpers, and farmers. Initially, there were cattle-breeders, but later they were joined by farmers. Cattle-breeders, warriors, and priests. Priests were the highest caste, they were the rulers, joined by warriors and cattle-breeders.

Their culture was war-like mostly. Priests were on top, but most of the population were warriors. They liked battles and breeding horses and cows. Cows meant the world to them. Cows were equal to life. Their life was among cows who gave them milk and cheese. They immolated them too. They bred cows and horses too. Later they invented chariots which helped them conquer everyone. It was an ancient type of society in the Vedas. It was a strict patriarchy. Women's role was to help men. A woman from the beginning wasn't independent. It was God who brought children into the world. Souls came down from heaven. Men fought in wars while women helped them with cows. But men treated women like friends. And cows were people's friends. This culture was the axis of the whole Indian civilisation.

Later these ideas were interpreted in different ways. That's what Hinduism was — people who spoke Sanskrit. The first texts — Vedas — were based on this principle. There was no notion of time in Indian culture, unlike in Iranian culture. Nobody cared about historical events. They had an idea of eternity. Time revolved around eternity, like seasons. That was like Greek culture, but not Iranian. Iranians invented time, as well as the end of the world, and Eschatology (the culture of waiting, pending). There is no culture of waiting in Indian culture. Hindu people didn't wait for anything. But if they waited for something, it was something that was brought by the Iranians to the North of India (the idea of Avatar — the incarnation of God).

Some ideas were implemented in Indian culture. But the general idea was that if you had something you won't lose it. And if there is something you don't have, it won't

appear anyway. So the philosophical idea of the Radical Subject appeared on this basis. It appeared in the most ancient Vedas. This idea is illustrated by this formula: there are two birds on a tree, one isn't eating, the other is eating. The one who is eating is *Jivatman* — a living soul, a human being; the bird that is not eating is the same living soul, but the one that is eating can get hungry, can die, unlike the one that is not eating, because it doesn't disappear. The whole Indian culture is based on this idea. So a man represents two people at once: one lives, being a part of history, the other one is eternal and that's himself. *Atman* means 'me'. Atman is eternal, nothing can happen to him. He is the god, according to this model. He is eternal, he can't change. He is revolving around himself. It's a mirror that reflects the truth.

A mirror can be broken, but nothing can happen to an object that was reflected in it. That's the general idea. Atman is a fatherly vertical beginning. Everything revolves around him. It doesn't matter if every person has Atman or if there is just one for everybody because every person is a unique reflection of this Radical Subject. The society respects Atman and basically respects itself. So the eating bird is the son of the not-eating bird and is itself at the same time: the father is the son too. The one who is not a son is not important, the one who is the father is a son.

Father and son are united, while being different at the same time. The important thing about the son is the father. All the other things that are in a son except the father are unimportant. Their relations are harmonised in Indian culture. Atman and Jivatman have no problems between them. Jivatman may feel bad, but Atman doesn't feel good or bad, he is just calm. Nothing gets to him, he is not involved in anything. Everything is revolving around him. Jivatman can end up in a dead end, but it's no big deal. He is not endless. But it doesn't matter. The only important thing is to find a way to yourself. To do this you don't need a saviour.

So our concept of God doesn't apply there. We won't understand each other. There is no place for God because if Atman is in the centre, why do you need God. There is a deep inner sacred 'me' that is god. That's the formula of the highest identity where Atman is Brahman. So, everything is fine. If something is wrong that's our problem, but not our Atman's. This sacred idea is called *tat tvam asi*. It means that I am him. I am not a different one. Me is me. Small me is big me. Their bifurcation is a hallucination that is needed because the world is a hallucination itself. The world is the visibility of the bifurcation where there is no bifurcation; without it, there is no world. There is no sense if it's something bigger than just an illusion. It's going to be too chaotic.

The Indian model is that everything is okay even if it's totally not okay because no one cares why there is something wrong. When I was in Delhi, I met a lady at a bus stop where there were no buses, only trash all around (I wasn't sure about her age, fifteen or ninety), who sat in the same position for four days in the street. Was she waiting for a bus? Or was she just a beggar? Or was she thinking of something? Was she in a

religious pose? There were a lot of kids covered in trash. But it doesn't matter to anyone. This paradox between Atman and Jivatman is represented by the way they treat dirt (which is everywhere). There is an extremely dirty river called the Yamuna in Delhi. I saw a sign near it that said: 'Please keep the river Yamuna clean'. When I looked at it, it looked like a huge floating dump. I couldn't understand how the sign 'Please keep river Yamuna clean' could have been put there when it is so dirty. How do these things, this cognitive dissonance, correlate? All religious rituals in India are connected to cleaning (defogging). No wonder when it's so dirty there… But why is everything covered with dirt then, if they love cleanliness so much? No other nation compares to them in terms of dirt. Everything is covered with dirt there, layers of dirt. Even water is dirty. You can't have a bath there. People who go to the shower put a plastic bag on their head because the poisonous water can destroy your eyes. Nevertheless, cleanliness is the basic principle of their religion. In one of the holy texts, I found an explanation. It turns out that dirt is cleanliness. They clean themselves with dirt.

How does an ascetic clean himself? He rubs dirt all over himself. Our vision of cleanliness is useless there because for them everything is based on the idea that everything is an illusion, and that is crucial. Cleanliness is dirt; dirt is cleanliness. You have to clean yourself with dirt. It's not a paradox. They don't care, because it's part of humanity.

Our idea of the soul is meaningless for them. It's a meaningless hallucination for them. There is no life, death, birth, or morality, because no matter what you do, you remain Atman. But there are rules based on the three-caste-structure (now there are four). The closer the caste is to Atman the higher it is. The distance from an eating bird to a not-eating bird is divided in the Upanishads.

Brahmans, who are ascetic and fast and don't demand anything, are fine and get everything because they don't want anything. They are closer to the not-eating bird. Kshatriya are between the two birds. The one that wants a lot, loses everything they have. The greediest people are the poorest. The kindest people are the richest because people just bring them things. It's a centre oriented system. It's not about Brahmans being the masters of Kshatriya, or Kshatriya being the masters of Vaishya. Brahmans are more than Kshatriya. While Kshatriya are more than Vaishya. It's epistemology: the wise ones are better. But Brahmans don't rule anyone, because it's stupid useless labor. They don't have power, but they are everything. Their word is everyone's command. It's enough for them to make a gesture for their wishes to be fulfilled. But usually, they take care of flowers, waking up the gods in a temple in the morning, washing them, cleaning them, and putting them to bed at night. This happens everyday. He who says prayers, not asking for salvation, but because of a good mood, always smiles and is the closest to Atman.

There is only one Atman for all three castes. The social structure is based on the principle of thought and knowledge. The happiest people are the ones who know that Atman is Brahman. Kshatriya have a hunch. Vaishya are separated from it by many things, wishes, possessions. The most stupid are the fourth caste that wasn't there in the beginning. But if anyone of any caste understands that he is Atman, he becomes a saint. But he doesn't become Brahman, only a saint. He can get his own temple. Everything is based on a thought. There is only one thought that everything is rubbish. Our feelings, fears, and desires don't mean anything. Whatever happens, good or bad, happens to a hallucination, but not to us. Nothing can happen to us.

This powerful religion of Vedas is described in the Upanishads, which are the commentaries to the Vedas. There are no good or bad gods, nor Asuras (Titans or more developed creatures), because everyone has Atman, who is the most important thing for everyone. If they think too much of themselves as gods, they may become lower than any demon. If a demon remembers about Atman, he will be saved. If a god forgets that he is Atman, he will lose himself. It's a different hierarchy, it doesn't matter if you are high or low, nor who you are. You have to know one thing: there is only Atman. Atman is the most important thing.

This Radical Subject is not affected by anyone, doesn't depend on anyone, doesn't owe anyone. It is eternal and society revolves around it. There is no history because of the Radical Subject everything is in its place. Everyone is at different distances from him — they can get back to him or totally forget about him. There are a lot of stories about it. For example, a happy god is completely stupid. He rules everyone, but he doesn't know Atman. So, all the world laughs at him while he rides across heaven. This religion has an interesting geometry. This pure religion was brought by nomad Indo-Aryan peoples.

M: But what does 'have a hunch' mean?

D: That's the most difficult part because the whole religion and all the religious texts describe what it is to guess and understand what the two birds mean. It seems to be simple. He who understands, belongs to one…

M: Does a person know that he has understood?

D: Yes, there are lots of criteria of what changes in a person (eyes and everything else) when he understands. There are many huge criteria that make one understand. There is a difference if a person fully understands or not. There are also many ways to understanding: to understand at once, to have a hunch, to understand something different, to understand after one's death, to understand while living. There are many formulas. You try again if you don't understand. There are endless tries. If you don't understand, it doesn't mean anything in terms of people who understand. It's like bubbles at sea.

So nomadic Indo-Europeans came to the Indian peninsula and brought this idea. They separated from the Iranians, the Persian predecessors. When they came there, the

territory wasn't abandoned. A lot of peoples with different Logoi lived there. They didn't know anything about Atman. They didn't understand what they were talking about. So there were a lot of new people who didn't understand. So those few who understood established their power. They had a different model of understanding. Mostly Dravidian, Austro-Asian and Austronesian people lived there. The ones who understood had white skin mostly, the ones who already lived there had black or dark skin. So you could tell the caste by one's skin. That's why caste is called Varna (colour). People brought their culture into a society with a different culture. It wasn't better or worse. There were two different cultures. The ones who came were very aggressive (they didn't value life because nothing mattered to them), so they conquered everyone really fast. They didn't hesitate to kill or die. It was an illusion to them, so they were absolutely free. They went to the South, to Sri Lanka. They imposed their culture, religion, and language on everyone except the people of the southern states (where Tamils live, descendants of Dravidians who lived there before them). Everyone spoke the Indo-European languages Sanskrit (an artificial language) and Prakrit (a developed language).

The Indian civilisation was established by culture and religion. There were a lot of poles. But there was no aim to establish a state because there was no value in it. They created *mandalas* (circles). There was Atman (or Brahman) in the centre, the rest was around him. Power wasn't the aim. Society was built around Brahman schools. In this situation the centre wasn't a prince's temple but a school that taught the Radical Subject formula. Everything else was built around them. The ones who brought this culture didn't know anything about farming, and they met farmers. Local peasants started to integrate into the third caste of cattle-breeders. They started to be peasants. The society settled.

The conversation with the local population took 4000 years. The locals were told they were nobody. They were offered to become the third caste since they fed them. The locals didn't even have such geometry. They didn't see themselves as the third caste; they were something different that we don't know now. The third caste was expanded. Farmers joined cattle-breeders (Vaishya). You are going to be what we think of you. They agreed and the villages began to be integrated into the third caste. They were built without Kshatriya.

There were fewer warriors over time, because there was a lot of land and farmers on it. But there were more and more Brahmans (their priests). Each village of the Indian society had its own Brahman who was the owner of the pond, where he washed himself. Everyone else depended on that water. If someone was against the Brahman he just disconnected the water. So he could influence people's life cycles.

Brahmans were the centre of their civilisation. They taught people and watched the farming process. Kshatriya lived in big cities. They were useless, because their mission

was accomplished. They weren't the centre of the civilisation. The civilisation was based on Brahmans (who represented knowledge) and local peasants who were included in the third caste. The peasants started to cultivate land with the help of animals and heavy plows. Cattle-breeders found their place in society too. The cow was a saint. Hindu don't eat its meat, because cows give a lot of other food, such as cheese and milk. You weren't allowed to kill cows. They were brought from the north, but cows are found throughout Indian culture. Cow's manure was also respected. They use cow tortillas[23] as coins, they exchange them and use them for heat. They store them very carefully, while many houses don't have a fourth wall. If they have four walls, they don't have a roof. Everything is untidy except those cow tortillas. Manure is sacred. Probably even more than a cow.

This culture used the Brahman's language; people started speaking their language because Brahmans didn't want to know any other language. The local population (Dravidians, Austronesian hunters), consisting mostly of peasants, accepted their culture, language, and Atman's religion too. This process took a few thousand years going from village to village. It reached the south, but somewhere in the middle of India the language starts to fade. Everyone, including Brahmans and Tamil Brahmans, should know Sanskrit because the Vedas were written in Sanskrit. But some villages spoke the Tamil language and other local languages. In the north and in the middle of India, Indo-European languages like Prakrit and Hindi killed local languages. But local languages survived in the south. However, the culture was Indian.

There are a lot of European-looking people in India, but their skin is dark. They have thin noses, wide shoulders, but are black. So that was the victory of Indo-European culture because culture is more important than the colour of skin. The Atman-Brahman culture spread all over. But some people weren't a part of that three caste system. It's a unique case, and a fourth one was added — Shudra. Those were the people (from the point of view of this political and cultural model) who couldn't understand anything at all for many reasons. The Atman-equals-Jivatman idea was unreachable for them. They were a part of the society, but they had no human dignity. They didn't have their culture. They worshiped some gods, the spirits of the dead — Preta. Shudras had their own dark culture.

But there was one layer that was even lower, and which wasn't in the fourth caste. Now they are called Dalit, but at that time they were called Paraiyar (outcasts). They weren't allowed to get close to settlements where castes lived (Shudras could live and work there). Paraiyar were kept away. So this culture was quite strict. This culture, indifferent to ownership and power, turned out to be quite strict.

M: What's wrong with the Paraiyar?

D: Well, it was as it was. It is known that the castes appeared from different body parts of the perfect man — *Purusha*. Brahmans were born from the head; Kshatriya,

from the shoulders; Vaishya, from the hips. The first ones think, the other ones feel, the other perceive the world on a physical level. Shudra were the legs (feet). Paraiyar were born from the dust under Purusha's feet. They weren't even allowed to drink from wells. They drank water from animals' footsteps on the ground. Paraiyar were tribes that couldn't integrate anywhere, even in terms of work. The new population of Paraiyar came from the process of mixing of castes.

The worst crime was to marry a person from a different caste. A Paraiyar was born into such a family. He was like an animal, anti-human in terms of society. It was the worst crime because a person was somewhere in the middle, he couldn't identify his position towards Atman, so he got thrown away. You could loose your human dignity with such a marriage. Even the highest castes couldn't mix together. A Brahman marrying a Kshatriya could become Paraiyar. The mixing of castes was like breaking the Universe's rules.

The Indo-European people of the Vedas culture conquered the local population, but it wasn't neutral. It wasn't just clay. They had their own culture, gods, religion, and mindset. They started to confront the Hindu invaders according to a few strategies. The first one was to ignore them, it was the dominant strategy. The second one was to follow them, mix with their religion but to change the idea of their culture. For example, to continue working in the fields but interpret it from the invaders' religious point of view, or impose a different meaning on their gods (they didn't have such a big meaning). So they took a demon and said that he was okay because he knew Atman. And they imposed different meaning on figures of local cults.

This strategy is clear from the Indo-European point of view: to save their own gods (dominating strategy) or to reinterpret the gods' meanings. But when they took a name (for example, a Dravidian one) to change its meaning, Dravidians implemented their own meaning into this intermediate image. The highest people insist on their meaning, while Dravidian people try to reinterpret it. Meaning comes with the name.

Traditions were imposed almost illegally. So intermediate cults appeared because of that process. It was enough to understand that Brahman is Atman. So even if a Paraiyar understood that Brahman is Atman, that was enough. This idea was split into Vishnu and Shiva: Shiva (destroyer of illusions, it didn't mean bad things) and Vishnu (supporter of illusions). If we go back to the birds idea, the most important is the not-eating one. According to Shiva, we destroy the eating one and strip (expose) the not-eating one. According to Vishnu, we see two birds, but they are the same, they both explain each other, they live because of each other. Scary Shiva says that the eating one is an illusion, while kind Vishnu says that they are the same. But the meaning is the same. Two approaches to the same thing. Our Christian understanding is not relevant there. There are no analogies of either Shiva or Vishnu. We can't compare them to God or the Devil. Every attempt to find an analogy fails. The whole geometry of this religious doctrine is

totally different. There are no bad or good ones. Only school children can think that way.

Philosophically it's important to understand what they think. They think that you can deny an illusion or you can show that illusion is an illusion of truth. Let's take Plato's model of images and copies, paradigms and icons. Icon means copy in Greek. A paradigm is a sample. They can be combined. An icon is just a copy of a sample. If you destroy an icon, you won't harm a sample. That's what Shiva says. If you destroy any copy, the sample will only benefit from it. The other idea is that a copy is a copy of a sample. It's great because it points to a sample. If you worship a copy, you worship a sample. Byzantine Iconoclasm and Iconodualism solved this exact problem, Iconodualism (Vishnu) won. The bird is great because it is also an eternal bird. Nevertheless, it is not eternal at the same time. It's a sample's copy. Iconoclasm is about denying the copy and worshiping the sample. It's an example.

The structure of the Hindu model is totally different. Within the framework of the Shiva and Vishnu models, their positive and negative attitudes, there was an idea to work with the Dravidian religion. They can be included as a copy of Vishnu (you can say this god is Vishnu under a different name), or you can use the negative side, because at the beginning Indo-European Aryans acknowledged the local gods, Asuras, as Titans or demons, because if they can destroy something it is meant to be. These Dravidian gods became Shiva's escort. In theory, they should have been rejected because they were on the lowest level. But because Shiva destroys the copy, local gods became good, being a part of Shiva's escort. This metaphysics made them noble and a part of the destroyer. But he was a positive destroyer. His escort wasn't negative either. Vishnu treated them like small gods and they were accepted too.

So the strategy of inclusion of what has been rejected happened throughout the whole of Indian history. The change of Indian religion meant the inclusion of local cults. Local Dravidian cults were included more and more. New gods appeared too. At first, there was the god of wind, Rudra, who later became Shiva. He was a Dravidian god with a non-Indo-European name. The new gods were included too in a later Hinduism. They became a part of the common model.

The attitude to the female beginning (Cybelian Logos) is interesting. This intermediate moment is the Dionysian Logos. Pure Aryans follow the Indo-European tradition of Apollo's Logos and eternity. This intermediate game with Dravidian cultural forms creates the Dionysian Logos. Ambiguities are common for the Dionysian Logos. So the mother goddess cult appeared because it was dominant among Dravidians. Indian culture is flexible. It opposed the mother goddess cult, but it couldn't throw it away. That's why female goddesses appeared, like Kali who also became part of this Indo-European patriarchal model. There is a version that many traditionalists wrongly support that the name of the last dark age, Kali Yuga, came from this goddess

Kali. But that's not true, it's a different creature. It's dark (demon) age. Kali is the one who kills the dark age (time). Goddesses became Shakti (the power of male gods). Basically, they are helpers who can't be individuals. They are not enemies. Women are men's friends as well as female gods. Male gods don't do anything, but the real work (including war, slaying demons and chthonic monsters) is done by goddesses. They are more powerful, but less clever, while male gods are helpless but more clever. That's a Hindu model, but the difference is not that big. So there is a balance.

The cult of 'The Great Mother' is established where we eventually find Cybele. But if you examine ancient texts in Sanskrit, there is no mention of the Great Mother in terms of Cybele. It's not the earth, but the might of the higher god that casts an illusion and removes it; it helps Vishnu to support unity and Shiva to destroy it. She doesn't do it herself; she just helps because she is a female beginning. Shiva is constructive because he knows the highest identity. In relation to Vishnu, she also just helps. The mother goddess hymn and the whole religious movement of her worshipers have nothing in common with the Cybelian Logos. It was amazing to me because it was written there. What kind of the Great Mother is it? She is not extraterrestrial, she doesn't have dominance over men, she is a friend to men.

Vedas Logos changes the structure of Dravidian images. Dravidians try to rethink these figures on the level of local village cults. Hindu patriarchal creatures are interpreted in their initial common way. So it was a long conversation. Hindus are not interested in what is beyond their territory. The Chinese accepted Buddhism, but the Indians didn't take anything from anyone. This culture has an amazing feature: they are totally indifferent to what happens around them. It's unique. They lack curiosity. I think they didn't even understand that they were colonised by Englishmen. It was another illusion for them. It was most unpleasant for the freedom fighters because they understood that they were colonised, while Brahmans didn't pay attention. Gandhi wasn't Gandhi Mahatma. This was just a nickname, given to him by a poet. He was a merchant from the Vaishya caste,[24] who called himself a humanist. He wanted to cancel the caste system, as was the case in the West, and he wanted to move to humanist forms of religion and to create a new society. He was a nationalist.

Modern India is a leftover of the true Indian culture. It was formed under English influence. They accepted many elements. Modern India consists of the lower castes. It's not a continuation of the ancient civilisation. Left-wing humanists are not as bad as nationalists. Indian nationalists offer to create a national government with Hinduism as a religion, to chase away people with different religion, and to get rid of the castes and form a national bourgeois Indian state. There is nothing traditional about it. The initial idea of Hinduism is not represented in either left- or right-wing parties. Both of these models are modernists that go back to Hinduism's roots.

Indians are not interested in anything because their consciousness is in the constant process of work with Dravidians. Two Logoi are in a constant intense conversation: Cybele and Apollo together with Dionysus. And this fulfils their lives. They basically don't need anything because they have all types of archetypes in them. The positions of both sides constantly shift from side to side. Indo-Europeans continue to go inside the Dravidian population, while Dravidians continue to reinterpret the images they had pushed there before. India's role is going to be nothing but the protection of itself from all outside invasions, including Islam (which has a completely different Logos and which is filtering into Indian culture) and English occupation. Still the main thing in India is the confrontation between these Logoi, which is totally fulfilling.

Soros appeared in India and what did he do? He decided to set Paraiyars against everyone else. He proclaimed Indian culture to be fascist and wanted Paraiyars and Shudras to have all the power. Destroying the whole culture had never come to anyone's mind before. This was Soros' foundational idea. It's the end. This is an attack on eternity. This eternity may have a great number of forms, dialectics, agreement and disagreements. It has a great diversity. But there has never been anything like Soros before. There is nothing worse than modern liberal globalism. In every society they can find total morons to support them to destroy the basis of their civilisation, no matter what it is. It's a total destruction.

Let's talk about Buddhism, which is very interesting. Buddhism was nihilism. Buddha, ong before Soros, also tried to explode Indian culture. Buddha was from the Kshatriya caste. He announced that there were no castes, or gods, or even Atman, which was the most terrifying thing for Indians. You could say anything except this. If there was no Atman, there was only emptiness and freedom from everything. Freedom not from illusions, but from the lack of illusions. Everything is the streams of Dharmas. Dharmas are natural powers (elements). There is an emptiness inside.

In the first generation (that is, Hinayana, 'smaller vehicle'), early Buddhism had Pratyeka-Buddha as the main figure. A person who proclaimed himself as Buddha. There is no Atman; everything is an illusion to him, he freed himself of everything. He went to Nirvana (the nothingness). Early Buddhism is nihilism and individualism (just like the Western way of thinking). It sounds like the Greek skeptics too. Pyrrho could have brought back Buddism from his military trip to India with Alexander the Great. There were also Buddhist Greek states in Central Asia left after Alexander's empire. There is a genetic connection between European and Hindu nihilisms, which is early Buddhism. Only you can save yourself from the belief in Atman. Pure nihilism, individualism, Titanism, etc., this period took some time. But nihilism spread, even some emperors accepted Buddhism as a state religion. In the 6th century BC Atman became persecuted.

India had been in a state close to what modern European civilisation is experiencing now. But how did it leave it behind? There was a Buddhist who accepted that there was nothing He said that everything should be destroyed, including Atman, but the destruction that early Buddhism calls for is also an illusion. So we should destroy the destruction. So he came to the idea that Pratyeka-Buddha was wrong and everyone should be saved. To do this one shouldn't escape from reality, but become the centre of it, helping everyone escape the reality. The idea of Bodhisattva appears — this is Buddha who stays, instead of leaving, to help everyone learn the truth.

Refusal of this leads to a new Hinduism — Mahayana Buddhism ('Greater Vehicle'). Gods and Atman are acknowledged again, but Atman is Bodhisattva now. So everything is settled. Early Buddhism is deprived of nihilism, and it is returned to the Hindu context, but it's not proclaimed. So everything went back to the initial state. After the burst of Buddhism in India, it soon came to naught. Buddhism supporters went to China where they come across Daoism. So it turns into a complex religious system but without nihilism; it's been overcome. I think this shift reflects Heidegger's ideas. He says that we should take European nihilism, understand it and overcome it and create a philosophy of the new beginning (denial of the denial), but without returning to the past. This already happened before Heidegger's suggestion. So nihilism and the attempt to destroy was overcome. The idea of going to Nirvana was replaced by Bodhisattva, who is present in this world. The best Bodhisattva is the one who is located in the Western Heaven (Tushita). Many Bodhisattva promised many things like not leaving without saving 100 000 people or revealing the truth and saving all the creatures. This one said he wasn't going anywhere until a single speck of dust was enlightened. So he was going to stay. He proclaimed the world to be a mix of the immanent and transcendental. That's an example in Indian history of how nihilism could be overcome without going back to Hinduism. But they returned to the metaphysics of Atman/Jivatman. Buddhists started to read classical Shiva texts because they were mixed in some aspects.

So that's the whole picture of the Indian Logos. You can find more details, translations, and commentaries in my book *Indian Logos*. The last thing, usually the attempt to analyse a religion through the eyes of a different one is the most nonconstructive thing. Nobody says you should accept a different one; you should stick to yours. But if you want to understand it, it's useless to judge it with our criteria. Like I told you about the Great Mother; you think it's the same thing, but there is nothing in common. It's a different Great Mother. When something seems unpleasant to us, we should check if we have the right approach to it. The structure is clear when we look at it as a whole. The worst thing was implementing monotheism in Indian culture by Europeans and Muslims. They said that Atman is not Brahman, but God creates the world and there are unsolvable contradictions between them. That destroyed the Hindu

model. Dualism was created — *Dvaita Vedanta* (impassable duality) — something that is not intrinsic for Hinduism.

You shouldn't be scared of Vishnu or Kali, but the approach of monotheists who started to change Hindu religion (without having a closer look) according to their standards, which are irrelevant there and have a different coordinate system, gives the wrong result. What's important is that Hinduism and Christianity shouldn't be mixed. It will destroy both traditions. You can study them, but being in their tradition is totally different. You cannot accept Hinduism because you are nothing if you weren't born into a caste. One can be interested in Hinduism, but he will always be nothing in it. He will have to drink water from a bear's footprints. So we can't accept Hinduism. You can study it but not mix it because it's nonsense. It means destroying your own tradition, and changing someone else's without understanding it. The preachers of Hinduism — Vaishnavi — are not Hindu, they are scum. It's nonsense. They can't invite anyone into their religion except to drink water from animals' footprints. Hindus are not allowed to let others be part of their rituals, except only on the lowest level, to look after elephants. A French traditionalist, Alain Daniélou, tried to do it and was accepted to the lowest caste of string musicians. He accepted it anyway. He liked Indian culture so much that he was ready to play a two-string instrument and polish shoes for them. It is possible, but why would you change our wonderful religion to polishing shoes.

M: What about gypsies?

D: That's a different Logos.

M: Aren't they from India?

D: They came out of India, yes. They were among the lowest caste. Later they separated and created their own culture. There was a Russian researcher who said he knew Gypsies perfectly and that they worshiped the same gods as the Hindus, like Shiva and Indra. He wrote a text of such a nature that everyone was happy, including the Gypsies and the Europeans. When they asked him about his sources, it turned out he wasn't the man who wrote it. They started looking for the right person. When they found him, he said his archives burned down. So it was someone's crazy idea. Gypsies have their own saviour, who is the enemy of Jesus Christ and the Devil. It is the Moon Saviour, who saves only Gypsies. There is also a tradition that Gypsies don't possess anything, but rather they know how to relax, cheer and dance — basically to comfort themselves. Dances and singing mean a lot to them. If you have a motherland you sing to it, but the meaning is not that deep. After singing you go back to working for your country. You dance with half the power. But when you have nothing, that's everything to you. Nothing compares to your singing. There is an idea that these are initiatory ceremonies that take all their energy.

M: And it doesn't stop…

D: As long as you can… They have few Indian elements in their culture. Afanasyev's fairy tale about a vampire obviously borrowed material from the Gypsies[25] . That's the story of when a girl met a guy at a village meeting where girls met boys, and a guy asked her not to follow him home, unlike the others did. He asked her not to do it a couple of times. Her friends started to laugh at her. So soon enough she tied a thread to him and found out that he lived in the cemetery. He was a vampire. It's a classic Slavic story because the word 'vampire' is Slavic, it comes from *upyr* (Упырь). The girl died but was resurrected again. She turned into a flower, then again turned into a woman. This was repeated many times. It's a Gypsy fairy tale. This is a specific Hindu feature, when a person turns into a flower. *Thumbelina* is a Gypsy plot adopted by European culture. Indian folklore is full of such stories. Later I found it in Afanasyev's works. It obviously came from the Gypsies because it's the same story but in Russian. So, Gypsies are a different story, part of the Eastern European Logos. I recently finished two volumes about Eastern Europe (Slavs and non-Slavs). They are being printed now. They are about Balts, Hungarians, Romanians, Eastern European Jews, and Gypsies. But these are Slavs without Russians, southern and western Slavs and their cultures. Well, it's a different thing…

The Second Fireside Conversation

Again, some of the names of the interlocutors have been kept anonymous for reasons of privacy. And sometimes the conversation jumps around a bit which is in large part due to some technical problems in the recording and the dynamic nature of conversations. Regardless, the content remains intriguing.

D: …I had a superstition about the darkness. But later I understood that it was a different dimension of religion. You have to accept it and everything becomes clear because if it's a close saint, you can approach him. Though you have to cope with good things, even if they are not that important. You have to practice to feel it. Because God is far away, you usually don't reach out to him with unimportant requests. You can ask Nicholas about things that are important to us, but not fundamental things. His help gets us to the big religion. He is so important, he stands at the gates. These gates lead us to religion. So if we approach him, we'll see that he helps, because he is close to modest (simple) people.

Woman (W): I read a story about an old lady who prayed to John the Baptist before cooking pancakes. She asked him for the dish to be good. So he appeared before her and said, 'Why are you praying to me? I'm fasting in the desert. You should pray to Saint Nicholas.'

D: That's right! There is a book called *The Remains of Paganism in the Christian Tradition* by Uspensky that has lots of information about Saint Nicholas. It's a good book with lots of examples; for example, about statues of Nicholas. It was forbidden to build statues of the saints. But there were two exceptions, for the great martyr Paraskeva and Nicholas. When they tried to forbid the statues of Nicholas, all the people went up in arms. It would've been the end of everything, including the Church and the government. It's a very interesting story about Nicholas. By the way, if we speak about wool, wool was considered to be the symbol of multiplicity. So people sat on a bear's skin, for example, to have lots of things, like food or children. Fur or hair was considered to be abundance. When you spin from wool, it seems to be endless.

W: Do you remember a story about a foreigner who was drowning. He didn't know the name of the icon that was at a train station. So he screamed, 'Saint Train Station', or something like that, and the guy was saved.

D: Well, it doesn't matter how you call him…

W: There is a saint who helps with paying taxes too.

D: Well, that's unusual.

W: I saw a beautiful icon with a lion on it and a martyr wearing a coat riding it. It's called 'Saint Mammès'. It's from the 14th century. So I read about his life. He was

called to the city because he didn't pay taxes. So he went there to explain the situation to them. On the way there he saw a lamb being chased by a lion. So he caught the lamb and saved it. He caught the lion too and rode it to the city. People saw him riding a lion and canceled all his taxes.

D: What a wonderful saint!

W: So, we should place this icon in the church, so we won't have to pay taxes.

D: Great idea! There was also an important saint, his name was Varus. He was a robber who murdered everybody…

W: There is no such thing as the Ukrainian nation.

D: Well, you can call a nation whatever you like, but Ukrainians have never been a single nation (people) because there were a lot of princedoms that consisted of different nations. For example, the Volyn Principality consisted of Russian and Slavic tribes. So the Volyn people were from the Dregoviches tribe. They had close connections to Western Ukraine. Galichina was populated by White Croatians and Nikulichs. They were called Buzhans altogether. They lived where modern Moldavia is. Galich Principality was separated, but they were all Russians, but they were different from the Volyn people…My parents wanted to name me Yan… Now, Father Vladimir asked me to talk about my trips, if you don't mind. So, the last time I visited you was in June. Since then I've had four trips to Shanghai, Italy, Azerbaijan, and Turkey. All completely different countries. Let's start with China. I really liked China. I was invited there after the Amsterdam conference where Chinese professor Wei-Wei and I defended the multipolar world against the globalists. Bernard-Henri Lévy represented the globalists. People call him the globalist monster. He hates everything that is not in accordance with his programme. According to him, there are countries who disturb or get in the way of humanity. These are Russia, Iran, Turkey, China and the Muslim countries. He said that humanity's most valuable thing is the spirit of freedom, which is found in the libertine and the Talmud. These two things are going to save humanity. He also cursed Mr Trump. He thinks he is an evil man, purely evil. Bernard used to be an advisor to American presidents, Nicolas Sarkozy, Hollande, and Macron. He used to have left-wing views, but when it became not so popular, he became ultra liberal. Now he hates left-wing politics. He's a really contradictory man. In Amsterdam, he cursed Eurasia, I mean all of us. He pointed his finger at me, saying that I was the most awful thing. Dutch people are tricky… He told them that America was not going to protect them, nor the spirit of the Talmud or libertine anymore. They have to fight Russians and Chinese on their own. They were just smiling at him. They are peaceful, they are not aggressive. He called for Europe to be the shelter of refugees, Talmudists, libertines, and LGBT+. It was his ideology. But the Dutch drew their own conclusion. They decided not to get involved in that mess, though they applauded him.

So, me and my Chinese partner, some other Talmudists, and Obama's advisor were invited too. Everyone spoke their minds on the stage of the Dutch opera house. It was packed with the Dutch, who bought really expensive tickets to see this interesting discussion. The Chinese speaker took the floor in the first part. He was told that it's good that China is a capitalist country, but it's bad that they don't have democracy. So he said that they had order, on the other hand. He defended himself well, saying that they have a traditional culture and the second-best economy in the world. By the way, I found out that there are no elections in China. The second-best economy doesn't even pretend that they have it. In Russia we have it and we don't at the same time. The Chinese just say that they have a communist party, so why would you need a choice. So, I stood my ground after my Chinese colleague. And eventually he invited me to Shanghai because we were on the same side.

It was really interesting there. The Chinese say it's like New York City. But there is one difference: there is no criminal activity, and no immigrants. Wonderful, bright, healthy people walk the streets there. A young lady can go outside alone at 3 AM.

The reason is that they have a New York style communism. It feels rich, clean, tidy, but it's not the West. It's an ancient Chinese civilisation. So we went for a walk in a park one night. There are a lot of Chinese. It feels like one Shanghai district is populated with a number of people who live in Russia. So this park is crowded with elderly well dressed dancing ladies. And they were dancing in pairs. So my colleague says that they are dancing to the anthem of China, that calls people to fight against capitalism. It was just modified to a dancing melody. Can you imagine that? The people who invited me spoke perfect English. I was amazed by that. They told me about the multipolar world, which they support, and about Chinese identity. The translations were great. I also met Michel Aglietta who is the traditional representative of modern economic thought from France. He is also one of the founders of the Revolutionist movement. The Chinese respect him very much. Thus they collect the most interesting things and invite people from all over the world, listen to them, and pay them a fair wage. They have been very attentive.

Then I met a couple of oligarchs. One of them, Eric Xun Li, owns a big part of Silicon Valley. He's a billionaire. The Dutchman, who organised the Opera meeting, was there too and he made fun of the Chinese, calling them capitalists. So the billionaire replied that even though he may be richer than the wealthiest people in the Netherlands, if he is asked to go to a communist party meeting he would be really scared. Why? If the mayor of New York wants to meet him, the Chinese billionaire would teach him a thing or two, but he completely depends on a Chinese official, because in that situation he is not a billionaire, but a part of the Chinese nation. Everything he has belongs to his party and his country. The billions of dollars he has are there for his country to use. Thus they banned YouTube, Gmail, and many websites, and created their own analog web

services. They made so much money like that. Everything is like that in China and they don't feel ashamed. So this oligarch gave me his book *The Deconstruction of Huge Narratives*[26] . Could you imagine a Russian oligarch writing such a book? I doubt he could even pronounce these words. So we discussed this concept for the whole evening. He added that they may not have elections, but they have real democracy. Thus they offer a couple million young people the possibility to run businesses. Some people run laundries, grocery shops, universities, newspapers, zoos and so on. They look at what happens to those young people. They immediately get rid of those who can't handle it, because they have a huge population and thousands of people compete for one job there. So they do this 'casting' 24/7. The thing is that the whole country prepares the best of the best. Though they don't have elective democracy, they have real democracy. They say goodbye if you can't do the job, even if you're someone's son or try to bribe someone. If they catch you trying to bribe someone, they execute you on the spot. So, they say they support Mao and Confucius. People take exams every time when they want to get a higher position.

M: As it was in ancient Rome.

D: Exactly. So they have party exams in various subjects, like philosophy, history, sociology, business, art, Chinese characters, and so on. If you fail, you just stay where you are. The stream is heavy, so they have a mass selection of elites. That means they have a meritocracy, which is the power of the worthy. If you succeed, you get more. If you fail, you end up in the streets. This creates a kind of community.

So during this conversation with the Chinese elite, I had a feeling that they didn't know me at all. There were professors, a director of an institute, some were from the USA. I thought they were the sixth column, because they support the West, speak English, some have businesses in the USA. So, the Chinese professor who invited me tells Eric Li that Mr. Dugin has a very interesting article 'The Sixth Column'. Well, I have millions of articles. They pretended that they had never heard a thing, but were very polite and invited me to work. They were very nice. It turned out that they knew a lot. The sixth column are those who are formally loyal, the fifth are those who openly oppose. The sixth column is our [Russian] government, which supports Putin and Russian Crimea, but also supports Western ideas and are liberals and technocrats. So, the Chinese professor explains the idea of the article to the oligarchs. They stopped being as calm as they were before. Their eyes expressed a hatred towards the sixth column. And here was I thinking that I was next to the sixth column. But they pointed at me as their enemy. 'He has to be excluded'. I thought they were liberals, but they seemed to be the Chinese intelligentsia.

The point is that great China has to be the global mighty power. The main aim is to eliminate the sixth column. So, things are better in China than in Russia because we don't have such people here. I thought that there was a multipolar system that decided to

compete with the West (billions of Chinese). Their style of confrontation is going from soft to hard. Russia is going to be involved too because they are very flexible. But there is a huge institution that confronts Western hegemony. This is very serious and can't be changed. It's impossible to bribe them, threaten them, trick them. It's a collective mind based on Chinese culture that follows its own path. It inspired me a lot because that sounds like an argument. What can honest fighters of globalism do? But there is an ally. I mean, it's not a Russia's ally… They are very pragmatic. They can't love or not love anyone. They are going to oppose the external hegemony for sure, never mind democracy, or Internet bans…

I came back delighted because the [Russian] government can make a mistake, but China is going to move forward no matter what. They asked me questions too. For example, about Putin. I said I can't tell exactly, because he's an ambiguous person, like a glass half full. They said it's very, very bad. Though I don't know what conclusion they drew. They said that Russia presents itself as a powerful country, and they need that, not half powerful. So, we made a secret plan. They had an idea of what to do to make Russia more powerful, with benefits for both China and Russia. We came up with a plan. I'm glad I had this trip. I saw that hope for China in its own way is fundamental. Our image of them being pro-Western capitalists is superficial. It's a different civilisation that uses everything that makes it stronger and gets rid of everything that weakens it. They talk about it all the time. If we need technological instruments, we take it, if democracy isn't profitable for us, we destroy it with tanks. We don't need YouTube, because it's not profitable for us. And no one thinks if somebody likes it or not. They invest a lot of money in their navy and armed forces. They are getting ready for the war with the West. But they want us to start first.

M: They are going to enter the war later.

D: Yes, they take it seriously. We threaten someone or play games, but they're dead serious. So, they invited me to move to China. The two biggest philosophers in China are Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. They wanted me to give lectures about Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, politics, and *Noomakhia*. At some point, they made bribes legal, and then shot everyone… They empowered Xi Jinping. That's important to them. But they say they chose him altogether. His predecessor was not successful, so we made an emperor out of the new one, so he would eliminate everyone. They use corruption and liberalism in the interests of China. That's for sure. It may not be ideal, but it's the most important task. So, they may implement a new policy, and then get rid of it. All these things are done with accurate calculations. They stop investment if it's not profitable. I think they've invested in corruption too. There are no accidental things like we have in Russia. Sure, sometimes they complain that something goes wrong. But everything is so systematic there.

Later I went to Italy, where I held a presentation of the Italian version of the book *Putin vs. Putin*. I like the country too. I visited some friends of mine at Lake Varese. I haven't seen them for thirty years. At that time, in the 90's, we tried to unite left and right-wing people against liberals. All our events back then were accompanied by the police. Those were marginal gatherings, but very local.

So we met again with those people, but now the government consists of right and left-wing representatives. Some of them supported Salvini, the others supported Di Maio. That government meant death to Soros. So I met some people in Italy who started asking questions about the Radical Subject and the Fourth Political Theory. The conversation was like a fantasy because I was talking to people who understood everything for five or six hours. Their intellectual tradition and confidence were heavenly to me. In addition, there was a beautiful lake, tasty food, and wonderful, beautiful people. There was a man whose father used to be Evola's friend. They created the New Medal (Order) movement together. They had Evola's books and documents.

They tend to think that it's important to push ancient traditions through modern technologies and art. That's why they had invited Russian directors. They proposed to implement the 'Fourth Art Theory' about the Renaissance because Italy is the source of culture. So we started discussing how to implement it. Some people suggested that we should make tattoos of the Radical Subject. So I was talking for hours with people who have cultural groups all around Italy with their own platform and internet. They've been fighting against globalisation for a long time, and now they have their own government with lots of connections. I was happy.

The next day the book's presentation took place. I was surprised to see dozens of people. Half of the people couldn't even get inside the hall, but still, they were polite. So, I was on stage with 35-year-old Diego Fusaro. He's a Marxist but fully supports our views. He's completely our guy. He's a student of another Marxist, philosopher Costanzo Preve, who took our side twenty years ago. Young Diego was like a child to me, but his speech was so clear and bright, that I thought that there was a special continuity. He has anti-unipolar left-wing views. I shared his opinion though. I was amazed to see the next generation of clear thinking, popular, book writing people. So I saw how it all lives. There were people who I'd seen thirty years ago. So I thought how important it was not to give up and how hard it is for Russians. The European spirit amazes me because these marginal people who had no chances achieved their goals. If you put a thing somewhere, you'll find it in the same place thirty years later. It's hard to imagine such a situation in Russia. We're very emotional. But they did it by themselves.

Judging by the questions asked, a lot of people are interested in our problems and issues. You can find such an atmosphere at Saffron Poustinia only. There are no discussions like this in Moscow; people just quarrel and discuss politics without any deep thinking. Those people in Italy think about more strategic things and philosophical

issues. They understand that you should go beyond populist views. They are very interested in *Noomakhia*. They are going to publish and translate many books about the Latin Logos and many other things.

Then we went to Rome. There we presented in front of right-wing representatives. CasaPound is the only right-wing *squat* (when someone occupies a territory without asking). They occupied a palace. I was wondering how they managed to do this. They said there are 133 squats occupied by left-wing people: anarchists, LGBT, Soros. Among their authorities is Mayakovsky. So, they are nice people. They are very right-wing minded people. This meeting could have been very dangerous for me. But my communist friend Giulietto Chiesa came there. So we switched roles. He guarded the right-wing position and I defended social justice and humanism. The far-right-wing people recognised the rights of small nations and gave up nationalism. They are changing their minds, and getting ready to be friends with Muslims.

Later we met with a group of interesting Italians. One of them was a baron who is responsible for the exhibitions at the main expo centre in Rome in a palace. He liked everything and suggested they put on a Eurasian exhibition. So he arranged everything with the main shareholders by the end of the night, and then asked Russian artists, directors, and musicians to come. We're going to glorify the great Eurasia but let us join you. They even started filming everything, unprofessionally. There was a boy who didn't really understand why they made him follow grown up men and his mother. So they made a movie and went to level 0 of Rome — the level where ancient Rome was located. They found Mithras' shrine there and I gave a lecture there about Mithras. Then we went to Giordano Bruno's monument, where I gave a lecture about him too. I said that the Renaissance was a good thing, but that New Time was bad, and we need to go back in time, fix everything and move in a different direction and that this is possible only in Italy.

Then I visited a princess in Sicily. Different people gathered there. I met a monsignor, Dominican monks, representatives from the Carabinieri, middle-aged female activists with unidentifiable professions, but they were very active and energetic. They fought for good things, like abortion ban, children, preserving cultural heritage. I was scared sitting with them because of their energy. They were right-wing feminists. They are princesses and very conservative ones.

M: What kind of princesses were they?

D: Princess Vittoria Alliata di Villafranca, a descendant of a Visigoth king. The Mafia stole [Poliphema] from that palace. Every year the mafia sends her a cake with a knife in it for her birthday. That means that they are going to kill her. But that's impossible. She just doesn't care. She just plays with them like a cat with mice. She called for the Carabinieri. Later Dolce and Gabbana filmed a commercial at her palace. It felt strange to stay there, like I was in a different time. The palace was built according

to the Zodiac laws. There were huge figures of Jupiter and Saturn on the rooftop, fountains, ancient monuments.

It was an interesting meeting. There were people from China, England, Portugal. A former minister of Portugal wrote a book about Eurasia. While writing it, he came to Turkey, where he met the leader of the Patriotic Party, Doğu Perinçek. He's been a friend of mine for twenty years. We made Russia and Turkey friends again after the falling out that almost started a war. While waiting for a meeting, Mr Perinçek met a Turkish journalist who had done an interview with me a couple of times. So they liked each other and got married eventually. What a wonderful world…

There was an Englishman who wanted to make a foundation and put it in the palace, but without the princess, and later sell it to an Azerbaijani oligarch. But he failed to do so. He also mentioned astrology and soon enough moved to his profit calculations. Also, there was a Sicilian separatist, Massimo. I proposed that he fight the North League. So we arranged a meeting and now there is going to be the South League. I left delighted by the atmosphere.

Then we went to Karabakh, in Azerbaijan. It was my first time there. The place is occupied by Armenia, but officially it's Azerbaijani territory. We were invited by Azerbaijani officials to conduct a conference there. The president really liked the event, but the Armenians hated it. They said that we had been bribed by the Azerbaijanis because Russians can't just go there. We foresaw such accusations, so we took Deripaska's uncle with us; he is a Russian Duma deputy. So, the Armenians were confused when we asked if one could bribe Deripaska's uncle. Anyway, Azerbaijan is wonderful, clean and tidy. They treat Russians well. There are a lot of intelligent people. An Azerbaijani member of parliament told me that Erdogan's son wants to invite me to Turkey to attend the second anniversary of the attempted putsch. The thing is that I was there when the putsch started.

M: Did you participate?

D: No, I supported Erdogan. So I went to the conference that was held at Istanbul State University. I gave a lecture on Turkey's future and Eurasian identity, and on what path and ideology Erdogan should choose. After my speech the Turks wouldn't leave me alone, because I said what they think, but are afraid to say. That's what they told me. They wanted to make a book out of my lecture. Later we took a boat trip with some ministers and the president of the university. I noticed that nobody was drinking. I don't drink either. I asked why they were not drinking. I met a Turkish law professor who said that he'd been following me and my work; that Turkey should implement the Fourth Political Theory and that he only acknowledges Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. I felt surrounded by like-minded people. Italy and China are ready. He told me that they are conservatives. Later when Islam was illegal they couldn't not drink (that is, they had to drink), because people would think you were a Muslim if you didn't drink. And

women couldn't wear shawls, for example. So it's like drinking, eating pork, and not wearing a shawl. Now they are free to do what they want. They are coming back… Here's a woman wearing a shawl. They are happy they can wear shawls. And everyone seemed really happy. They are happy drinking water.

W: Freedom.

D: So there is a different kind of freedom, of drinking and wearing a shawl. We were on a boat trip on the Bosphorus. They also took selfies on that boat. They were all taking selfies, 200 people, with me and with each other for three hours straight. They don't drink though. It's kind of an intoxication. No one could let go of their cell phones. They photographed everything like Japanese tourists. It was interesting to see. So after that, I came to Sofronieva Pustyn.

M: What's your opinion on the Armenian Genocide?

D: Well, it's really sad, but we don't take sides as we're researching complex situations.

M: Armenia is closer to Russia than Azerbaijan because it's a Christian country.

D: Well, yes.

M: I wanted to get back to China. People of my generation remember that the Chinese and Russians were thought to be brothers forever. Now we're experiencing a changed relationship. So, why the great and wise Chinese nation since the times of Mao, who really respected Joseph Stalin? He said he would love to be like him because no politicians had made things profitable like Stalin. Stalin not in the eyes of Mlechin, nor Svanidze, but in the eyes of witnesses, including 120 conversations with Molotov, and memories of the chief aviation marshal… But why has China made a huge step forward in the past ten to twenty years? And why haven't we made any progress since 1991? Yabloko, LDPR, and other political parties are only words. Everybody knows a way out, but we actually can't reach it. If you let me answer my question… Churchill respected Stalin. Englishmen acknowledge that Stalin could act and keep quiet when it was necessary. He was the greatest politician and master, who took care of his people, like a good preacher. I think he was a religious man. Why can't we do anything now? By 1948 the consequences of WWII were eliminated. By 1956 we were able to accomplish Tselina. Now we've been trying for the last twenty-seven years and there is only progress in international politics. Russians are now taken into account. The army has gotten bigger over the last two years. Planes have had success in Syria. Some respect a strong Russia, but most of them don't want to have a strong Russia. They want the population to be between fifty and a hundred million. We're being played with. Stalin knew who wanted to play with him; he could see through people. Dmitry Ustinov became Narkom at twenty-seven. They weren't afraid to hire young people, like the Chinese. If you can work, here is a kiosk for you; two, three, five kiosks. But if you take

a shower, someone else will get the kiosk. Russians aren't lazy; we can work. History proves it.

D: You say the right things. But it's more of a statement than a question. I think so too, and I'm sure many Russians also think so. Anyway, in 2000 we had the same GDP and military budget as China did. Since then China has made theirs (GDP and military budget) twenty times bigger, while our level remains still the same. The point is that they managed to achieve something while being in the same conditions. They asked me the same question. They said that we learned a lot from you, but what's wrong with you? You're good at international politics, but what's happening inside the country? Well, I can ask the same question. What's wrong with us? Something's definitely wrong. Feels like we've got a virus or something. Something went wrong, like a piece of the mechanism came off, like we've lost something. Well, a lot of things are going well, people are wonderful, we're coming back to power. Many processes are going well. But there's something wrong with the rhythm, speed, and direction of this movement. Sometimes it's even getting worse, like sometimes we might even go backward.

M: Maybe we're getting further from Christianity? Saint George said when churches opened, people went there. There were big donations. Five to ten years later some churches became empty. They invited priests there. Why wouldn't you raise up your own priests? You have 800 households, 1500 people living in the village. I think it's more of an ideological fight for minds, rather than an economical one. We understand that Christianity is the strongest faith. The older generation understands it. The new generation watches films and TV shows like *Brigada* that show how profitable it is to be a bandit, and how good it is for a girl to find a rich boy. We didn't teach our kids work (labour). Films like *Big Family* are out of fashion.

D: There is no such film, I think.

M: I don't remember when they were building steam ships.

W: *Brigada's* time has passed. I watched it as a child.

M: To have a higher education is in fashion now, when our prime minister tells us about Skolkovo. But still, young people want to move abroad.

W: It's a different thing.

D: A young boy who got 400 points at a federal exam says he wants to live in England or Germany and doesn't know if he's ever coming back. What does it mean? It means a lot, it means that there are no roots. A tree can't live without its roots. You asked an interesting question. I'm curious if each of us can say what is wrong with us. Is the question clear? I ask it myself a lot and I think it's the right question. Let's do it clockwise.

M: I think the wrong part about me is that I'm an egoist and respect myself more than God. I was taught that you should achieve everything by yourself. Later we understood that everything should be done with God's help, with a prayer. I'm a doctor, I treat

(heal) people. I studied at Gorky University, they taught us everything about USSR's philosophy, history, economy. Does my patient care about my philosophical ideas? Now it's different. There are two commandments that are the most important for me, that I can sum up from the Bible: love God more than yourself and love your neighbour as you love yourself, with all your soul, heart, and mind. It's so easy and hard at the same time. Even believers who attend church do not always behave like Christians. Though we should follow their example. But we live in a time of change, which is hard, so we take care of ourselves but not our close ones. Fifty to seventy years ago if you lived in a village and your house was burned down, all your neighbours helped you to build it up again. That's impossible today. Why are we so unsympathetic?

M2: Because we sin.

W: An elder once said that everything is bad in the world because people don't pray so hard. There is a spiritual relaxation. Peoples' spirits rose in the 1990s when they built a church, but now it's not like that; monks are leaving the monasteries.

Woman 2 (W 2): I think that people are having trouble with their conscience. Even if you don't believe in Jesus Christ, you have a conscience that troubles you all the time. I've been noticing among people at work and my relatives that conscience has been crushed. Many people around me, even my relatives, are cunning and lying. Or maybe I just didn't notice it before. They are so sly and lying. […] I can't breathe around people. The problem with conscience is very important now. I don't know how to wake people up.

D: That's very interesting.

W: It's hard to answer. I think that since the USSR collapsed, there's been an emptiness. We were brought up in a different way. Now we have a consumer society. There's been no ideology in our country, no aims, no way of life, no goals. So they try to unite the country with Olympic games, football, patriotism. But there is no common goal.

D: Interesting.

W: Just an observation. When we lived in the USSR, we were proud of the country. Then everything collapsed and everyone approached God.

W2: Well, not everyone.

W: I still think it was almost everyone. Now there is pride for the country again, and many people have left the church. They even consider those who go to church to be…

D: …weak.

W: Yes.

D: Interesting.

M: When WWII started, a hundred churches were opened. After we won the war, fewer people were going to church. People relaxed.

W: Now it's kind of similar.

W: I'm not sure if I have the answer, but I've always thought that if there is a problem, that's because there is a lack of faith in God.

D: That's a wonderful answer.

M: I also think that Russian people, including Jews, Ukrainians, Belorussians, everyone who's lived in the USSR and Russia help each other where there is trouble or war, at peacetime people get wealthier, but the spiritual quality drops, people treat each other in a bad way. People envy each other looking at someone's two-story house. 'Why does he have a car that costs five million roubles, when I only have a car which costs 500 thousand roubles?' They take part in a useless competition. One should live according to conscience and the commandments. It feels easy, but we are always tempted.

D: Yes, interesting.

M: The problem is the lack of critical thinking, and unwillingness to take responsibility not only for yourself but for the country. I feel confused about seeing how the Russian people can celebrate a Russian team winning a football game. The happy people on the streets can be compared to the pictures of people celebrating Victory Day in 1945. Though these things can't be compared. I feel there is a demand for victory in Russia, but individualism prevails. After a big event is over we get busy with our own matters. No one can agree with anyone and do something together. All the decisions are postponed. My grandpa was a communist who worked hard, didn't steal and managed a lot of people. He was honest and didn't steal. I can hardly find such qualities now. Everybody thinks that one's job is a way to get wealthier, but we aren't ready to give anything in return.

D: Interesting.

M: I see. Who's next?

W: Indifference, lack of mercy, everyone cares about himself. Someone else's pain doesn't become your own.

W: I think we as a whole nation failed to bear our cross.

M: There are few people who look for a brother. People have lost a warm feeling, when you can have an argument with a person, but in a nice way; when you are on the same page and you're ready to change each other through a conversation, when you do it for the sake of a nice conversation. When you exchange a verbal kiss or a punch. It's like a game between a few people. It's something that can make you softer and pay less attention to routine is the search for the truth that is known to everybody.

D: We get it.

W: I think that I'm not getting closer to monasticism because of a lack of prayer. The world can be saved only through prayer. People may be too relaxed or lazy. There is no fear in front of God.

D: God save you.

M: I'd say it's the lack of will, when a person acknowledges that there's God, that he/she is a sinner, but no one's doing anything to mend his faith. A Russian man says we need to create a powerful country, but when it comes to action, too little is done. It's a sickness. Everything is done halfway, nothing is thought through. When you start something, you leave it half-way. It happens among simple people, on low levels, as well as among the ruling class.

D: Great.

W: People are not used to creating. They don't love it. Why aren't we doing anything? Why is nothing happening? I think that there could be anything in a Russian man's head, except the wish to create and build something good, thoughtful, kind, and eternal. We aren't used to virtue. We don't value it. People don't trust the government, ideas and anything that is beyond our material interests. In the 1990s everybody laughed at the people who believed the newspapers and witches. In Soviet times people laughed at fools who learned Dialectical Materialism. There was a sense of shame for a higher goal…

D: Wonderful.

M: I cannot notice the domination of materialism in all social spheres and people's consciousness. Whatever a person does, even if he is a believer, if he is worried about the future of the country, there is a domination of materialism and inertia.

W: First of all, I think it's pride. The moment a person thinks that 'he deserves it', like in that stupid commercial, he needs to be cured spiritually because after that moment his life becomes a wreck. The real problem is defragmentation of a person and society, when one can't pull oneself together, because one is overwhelmed by dozens of thoughts and ideas, so one doesn't believe in anything. That is Nihilism.

M: A man is not almighty; one should stick to one sphere. We have professionals. Seraphim of Sarov said that Russia was going to wake up. But it's not happening in Moscow, or St Petersburg. It's going to happen in the regions of Russia. People who live in the countryside are more spiritual.

D: Great.

M2: I couldn't agree. I'm from the countryside. It's not that spiritual, many people just get drunk and don't want to work. If one wants to do something, you are either afraid to do it because of the local mafia, or you just move away. We are not bees that live and work for one thing. People live separately in their own cells. When people in Armenia wanted to change something they went out to the streets silently when the government wanted to elect the same president and prime minister. They were just standing silently when police tried to beat them up. But they got what they wanted. They got a man that can change something elected. If all Russians went out into the streets silently too, we could change something. But there is no such leader who can gather all the people together.

W: I was at Bolotnaya Square in Moscow in 2011. There were so many people, I could feel the enthusiasm, energy and emotional blast. I've never seen so many people in the streets.

M: What did they go out for?

W: To oppose the system. Because of the corrupt elections. Let me finish. It felt like something was going to change because people did everything they could. Putin was going to fall, turn over, and burn down. But nothing happened. So it was the moment when people stopped believing that something could be changed at all. The faith in change was gone.

M: Well, the opposition was paid. All the protesters were paid. Pensioners get 300 or 500 roubles just to stand in the crowd. So now we had the World Cup to prove that we are a powerful country. But while the whole nation was paying attention to the cup, the government implemented unpopular laws like pension reformation. People won't even live long enough to get their pensions.

D: Great! Everyone had a chance to speak their minds. It's funny because Russian people change their minds during a conversation. Father, what's your diagnosis?

FV: The problem is systemic, it's not just a small reason. It's not that monks are going to pray to get the problem solved. Putin's replacement won't help either. I think that the problem has a complicated structure. To begin with, we've lost organic unity. During Soviet times, we had some kind of unity. It wasn't a scientific idea, but there was an ideology, a perspective. Religion was replaced by an ideology that united people. Now we don't have a common idea, perspective, goal, or understanding of what we want to reach. The goals that have been offered to us are destructive. These are consumerism, individualism, the opportunity to be a businessman, the freedom of choice of a university whose degree is going to be useless (an accountant with no experience is useless). There is no unifying idea.

Secondly, Russian people need strict discipline. It shouldn't be too strict, as when Stalin led the country. But we fall apart and separate when there is complete freedom and this lack of discipline and strictness. Well, China has strictness that empowers people. We are disintegrated as a nation. Individualism as a goal, as a meaning, as a spirit, that has come from the West, separated us into cells. The whole organism became a mass of organs. Like a Mercedes that is taken apart, you can't drive it. That's the state we are in. What the West has been undergoing for 500 years, took us a couple of days. All the things just fell on us, like porn and movies. The iron curtain fell and our development wasn't organic. We've become exposed to internationalisation, Hollywood, the Internet, etc. We've been swimming in this muddy stream separately. We have one internal feature. Russians can't unite naturally by themselves like the Chinese, Jews, Americans or Englishmen. Englishmen are a type, but Russians are God knows what. It turned out that Orthodoxy is not enough. After the ideological collapsed,

we were offered Orthodoxy, but it failed, like it was after the war when people walked away from it later.

Russia has always lived under stress or outside pressure, like the Tatar yoke; or the strict control of tradition (for the Old Believers); or wars and huge expansions (like when we constructed St Petersburg); or the strict leadership of Ekaterina or Nikolay I. So God helped our national insufficiency with external means. Now they've broken away. The nation is not united by anything. Orthodoxy doesn't unite us, because everyone sees it in a different way. It's impossible to find a confessor. The lack of a unifying idea won't let us take care of each other. Before that, there was a community. The destruction of the community as an atmosphere and a uniting element. Having community is impossible in the cities. We don't even know our neighbours. We're spreading away like water without a glass. We need to pray for Russia, for the countryside, for people to wake up, for young people to think, but not just get degrees. It's clear that we pray. I'm sure Athos prays too. There is a Cypriot monastery that likes Russia, not like most of the Greek monasteries. Cypriots really like us. The leader of that monastery offered us his help. But his help was refused. There is total gloom, sadness, and relaxation as a result. There is nothing to unite us. We're all in the state of anticipation, that something is going to happen on the outside, like an enemy invasion; Putin's replacement; China's structural implementation.

M: Well, many of our leaders were from outside. Stalin was from Georgia, Ekaterina was from Germany…

FV: We think that someone should lead us in the right way, someone should do something to us. But there is no internal connection within us, no national feeling. We're an imperial nation ready to annex other nations and territories, to love other nations, but not ourselves. There was a nationalist slogan: 'Russian, help a Russian'. But we are not ready to, that's the problem. We can help a Tatar, a Jew. We really like to help foreigners.

M3: Can I say something?

D: Of course.

M3: We don't value ourselves and we overestimate others.

D: A curious thing is that everything that's been said is right. There is no wish to argue with any opinions. Well, if we systematise what's been said, it's obvious that we don't want individualism. It's all around us, but we can't handle it, we don't know what to do with it, it weakens us, rather than making us stronger. We don't understand either who insists that things should be this way. Like there is a force implementing a useless thing that we have never wanted to have. We don't even know how to use it. Someone mentioned how unsystematic we are, which is also right, because the system has always come from outside. Even if we didn't like it. I've been hearing all the time that Orthodox people dream about Stalin. I think even the Patriarch mentioned it. The thing

is that we are not going to create the order that we feel is lacking. We don't know what to do with it, etc. There is one more Russian feature, it is that we scold ourselves. 'Things are going wrong because it's my fault, I'm bad.' Many people think this way and it's a noble feature. Even when we say that we've lost our conscience, we know what we've got to lose.

The second is that we need order. But everyone thinks that the government doesn't like the people. I mean, at all! It feels like the government is not with us. Like when you forget someone's name, or use a different name out of respect. The government treats us the same way. Like they don't want to know who we are. Sometimes they say that they've got the wrong people, and we feel out of place. We haven't focused on this, but it's a big problem, because when I talk to our elite, I can see that they don't know the people, and that they don't even want to know them. Not because it's bad or good. They don't even bother to find out what it is. We are so unpleasant to the authorities, so they are ready to deal with anyone…

M: Well, there's been this tradition since the 19th century — the gap between people and the government. There's been two Orthodoxies: the classic and the people's. There have been attempts to communicate with people, but not to learn the language they speak, but to teach them a new one that they don't speak. The gap started with the Vikings. Since then it's become a habit that we're being manipulated. The abolition of serfdom took place really late, in the 1860s. My relatives used to be serfs. So it had always been normal, a usual thing. It was okay to have pro-Western leaders like Ekaterina and Pavel. It's in our genes, but the elite should rule us in the right way. When they are doing it wrong, we walk in separate paths and do what we want. When we are told that we are free now, where are we going to go? Are we going to unite in communities? It's not working out because most of the people live in cities. And people in the countryside drink vodka because of dejection.

D: Well, now it's a dead end. I've been working on the last volume of *Noomakhia,* which is about the Russian Logos. It's going to be the 22nd volume. So I've been thinking about every aspect we've been discussing and I feel that it can't just end like this. Still, I think we understand that we need a leader and an order in the end. But, when the elders say that Russia's going to revive, it doesn't mean we're going to make more planes or paint churches; there's a different meaning. I named this volume the 'Russian Kingdom', because we had a kingdom and we have Russians separately, because the 'Russian' part was in slavery. So, the Russian Kingdom is a paradox. Actually, it's called the kingdom of the earth, because 'Russian' means earth, and the government is the sky. So Russians wish for the kingdom of the earth, not the sky. When a leader comes from Rurik's clan, it should be something of their own, but real. We want the best parts of us to be organised somehow, because we can't organise them ourselves, and if someone else does it, it's going to fail. The time we still have left in

history (maybe is not too much) is there for us to create the kingdom of the earth. To create the Russian state, the same as we are. We aren't going to evade all non-Russians, because it's always been a Russian feature to think a foreigner is better than a Russian. We are open.

M: Well, it's just a nationalist feature.

D: Yes, there is no Russian nationalism. If someone thinks this way, he is either crazy or not Russian.

M: They are stupid mostly.

D: Skinheads turn out to be *Chukchas*, different people. I haven't seen any Russian nationalist; they are either mad in a bad sense, or not Russians. I haven't seen any Russians among them. Still, I think we are going to do something big in history. Our eyes are afraid, but our hands still do things. Our Russian structure, organisation, Russian Kingdom, Russian system, which isn't like anything else, we have to accomplish it. We have to accomplish the best we have inside of us. I don't know how to do it because there is no evidence for it; there are no good signs that it's going to happen, no tendency. But the more it feels impossible, the more you want to do it. But what is possible, we don't want to do. Maybe these are our dreams as Nick said… This is our weak spot, but it's also our strength too. We are different from other people, or at least we think so or persuade ourselves so. Other people should live the way we do, while robots should follow the others. I feel very optimistic, even though everything is falling apart. The government keep its distance from us, and we can't organise ourselves. We've named these things already. It seems to me that we have a huge might inside of us, whose form we can't find, or talk about it in the right way, but it's been going through the people throughout our whole history. It feels like we've been waiting for the kingdom of the earth. We've had a kingdom but not an 'Earth Kingdom'. The earth didn't have power; it was a slave. The kingdom was a heavenly one. It was assigned from outside. We couldn't find ourselves, we were in parallel worlds, we thought wrong things about ourselves, we didn't know the truth about ourselves.

FV: All of our history is a searching.

D: Yes, a searching, but we could not find anything. It may be a good thing because if we say that we found it, it could be the end. What I'm happy about is that everyone knows that everything is completely wrong. We want everything to be okay, but we don't know what 'okay' is. If we don't know, it means that it's the wrong way. Still, we are on our way towards something. It is something that we can understand clearly, in spite of everything. This makes me feel optimistic. I feel that we (the Russian people) are on the edge of something really important. The trigger might be a bad thing like war, or a catastrophe, or a revolution. It's usually this way with us, we can't do otherwise. There might be a reason. But it's not a crucial circumstance. There are processes going on inside of us no matter what. It's becoming more objective.

M: It's been accumulating.

D: Yes. It's been accumulating. It's hard to say in a what way exactly and where. It might have been in a wrong way, not in the way we wanted. But there is a deep hum from the Earth Kingdom. There is a ringing of *Kitezh*[27] , though it doesn't exist. But its ringing is approaching though it can't be heard or seen, even if it's overwhelmed by the nonsense we live in, it's still reaching out. There are invisible streams (electricity) inside the Russian people.

M: An invisible thing is much more valuable that a visible one. You can have fun with material things, but there is no value to those things. Everything is so pretty in foreign countries, no litter, pretty streets. For example, in Austria there are no fallen trees, nothing. It's so awful. When I come home I feel good, even when I go back through Ukraine. I feel at home when I see a dumpster.

W: There is a part of India in us.

D: It's so great that we hesitate to be individualists. We criticise and blame ourselves for that. It means we are healthy, our soul is in good health. By the way, Kluev had this line about Russia: 'My country, white India'. It's dedicated to Russia.

N: Moving slightly off topic (but not too far considering how brightly Cynthia shines tonight), how do Russians perceive wolves and the moon in terms of their history and culture?

D: The wolf was very popular among the ancient Slavic people. Ancient Slavs were very close to wolves. *Volkodlaks*[28] and many wizards turned into wolves. But we've forgotten this tradition, the tradition of vampires and volkodlak. I think now Russians feel closer to bears; they are calm and don't howl. There is one interesting thing about bears. Back in the day, religious criticism of Russian people was based on something. If the Church forbade something, like dancing or celebrating Ivan Kupala[29] , people tried to do it. Every prohibition meant something. So I found one, which said that a Russian man was not allowed to have a bear and drink vodka with it. It turned out, that every Russian kept a bear as a member of the family. It lived somewhere near, in a steam house or something. There are close ties between a Russian man and a bear. If having a bear was forbidden, it means that Russians bred them and drank tea with them. Later I found a story called *The Foundation Pit* by Andrei Platonov when we travelled from Safronieva Pustyn with Dasha and Sonya. It's about a bear who works as a blacksmith during the Soviet period. So this tradition lasted even during Soviet times, that a bear was a part of the community. St Seraphim of Sarov liked to talk to bears.

W: Ivan the Terrible liked bears.

D: Yes, there is no Russian without a bear. So many fairy tales were written because of this. A bear is not that clever, so it's obvious that a Russian could trick him. And so it made a Russian guy happy, he turned out to be a clever guy. We've had a close relationship with bears. Each time we speak about them it feels just right.

M: Before the World Cup, English football fans were scared that 70 000 hungry bears trained to eat Englishmen were waiting for them.

D: It's the only animal that drinks vodka.

W: That's why it's Russian.

M: You can train anyone to drink it.

D: A horse? No, it will die.

M: A horse drinks beer.

D: Well, only bears drink vodka. And I'm quite sure that they even love it.

M: Russian people then didn't live in a rational way. Russians always used to help Europe and other foreign countries, like the Golden Horde, Napoleonic wars — we had to go to Paris, Hitler, and cope with communism. We save everyone except ourselves. Then we die.

D: What if a bear becomes the leader of the state?

M: We had Medvedev;[30] he wasn't so good.

D: That's right.

M: … he drank in winter. Everyone's afraid of him.

D: Well, speaking of his last name 'Medvedev', it means that he is the descendant of a pet bear.

N: There is, of course, a famous connection between Rome and wolves in the story of the upbringing of its founders, Romulus and Remus.

D: But not between the Second Rome.

N: What about the Third one?

D: It's connected with bears.

M: The wolf is a herd animal, and we are not.

N: So, the wolf had disappeared by the Third Rome. Very symbolic.

W: Why did you name your film *The Wolf in the Moonlight*?

N: I was looking for a poetic way to both describe the film and hint at the essence of Russia. There is something about this name that seems right to me, but I am not able to explain it yet.

M: 'The Wolf in the Moonlight' must be a bear!

N: Maybe that's the problem; they think it's a bear, but in fact it's a wolf.

M: The wolf is very important in European culture, especially English.

D: For Turkic people and Chechens too.

M: Not so much in Russia though.

D: But for the Slavs it was. The Lutici tribes called themselves Volkovichi. Volkh Vseslavyevich, was a very important epic character, a historical prince, who could turn into a wolf. The Serbs had a fire snake. There was a theme of turning into wolves before the Middle Ages in Russian culture, but it wasn't widespread. There are many legends about Volkh Vseslavyevich. So the wolf was always opposed to Mikula

Selyaninovich who was incarnated as a peasant. Volkh Vseslavyevich was incarnated as a prince. So the wolf figure was connected to the elite. We've had a wolf state. Volkh Vseslavyevich was a typical prince. He turned into a wolf, he went to India, and made it to the Tmutarakan Kingdom in one night. His opponent Mikula Selyaninovich was also associated with a bear. So the bear was the symbol of the people, and the wolf symbolised the early state.

W: All the fairy tales presented wolves as enemies. They are dangerous and they should be killed. I can't remember a single tale with a happy ending for the wolf.

D: Well, Vasilisa the Beautiful tamed the wolf.

N: Alex said it's good to be dangerous.

D: Usually the wolf is depicted as a stupid character in fairy tales.

M: The Grey Wolf also helped Ivan Tsarevich.

D: Yes, that's right. Well, Vasilisa the Beautiful only rode the wolf.

N: And what does the moon mean to the Russian mind?

D: That's interesting too. It's so far away. We are earth people. We need to think.

M: Excuse me, I remember that a few years ago Erdogan said that a Turkish wolf is not as powerful as a Russian bear, or a Chinese dragon, or an Iranian lion, but unlike them, it will never perform in a circus.

D: Erdogan is good.

W: A wolf is not a pig's friend.

D: The good thing about a wolf is that it always wins if compared to a dog. A wolf is proud, independent…

W: Incorruptible.

D: Yes, it's manly, equitable. They have a high culture in general. They have a language, community and hierarchy too.

W: Scientists proved that wolves never have cancer because they eat only once a day…

D: And only rabbits.

W: No, only when they are hungry.

D: That's brilliant.

M: So there are no fat wolves.

W: That's why they say 'to be hungry like a wolf'.

D: Yes, yes…it's interesting that Saint George was the lord of the wolves, he was their shepherd, if you will. In spring, he decided how many livestock animals (chickens, cows, sheep) the wolves should kill and eat. So, when a wolf ate someone's hen or a goat, no one ever complained. Everyone thought it was a sacrifice. Everyone cared about wolves because they realised that they also had to eat something. When St George created the world, he imposed some limitations. There is a legend of how St George created Rus. He got rid of the mountains and everything became flat. There were a lot of

snakes and wolves in the middle of the land, so he said it was enough for that chaos. So, from time to time, you're going to get sheep or bulls. But there's going to be a limit. You get what I give you. The same thing with snakes. Snakes' or wolves' victims…you were not allowed to resent the killing of your sheep. So, there was kind of a balance. Men and wolves had to have their share. That's why you were not allowed to get mad at wolves. St George was responsible for everyone's shares.

W: It makes me think of Ancient Egypt, where a man bitten by a snake was taken to Osiris' temple. He had to repeat the lines about Osiris who fought snakes. So the man died thinking that his god died because of a snake too.

D: That's a wonderful thought. Comfort. Well, the most painful torture is inanity, when something bad happens to a man and he doesn't understand why. When there is a reason, it is easier to cope with anything. When there is no reason it's a real torture. In India, there were tortures for different castes. For example, the most terrifying torture was uselessness for a Brahman. So if you make a Brahman listen to stupid things or watch TV, it's the worst and most terrible torture for him. Stupidity was the worst punishment for a Brahman. There was nothing worse than a stupid Brahman. For Kshatriya, there was the notion of honour. He could cope with stupidity, but if he was a dishonourable man or a coward, it was a complete discredit for him. While a Brahman could be a coward as long as he was not stupid, it was the opposite thing for Kshatriya. Honour is the most important thing. Wit is optional. Poverty and physical pain were the worst things for the third caste. The first two castes were able to starve like wolves, eat once per day or not eat at all; they could be poor too. While the third caste thought it was okay to be stupid and dishonourable, but not poor. It was unbearable for them. It's interesting how they grouped together. Every caste had its own fears and unique advantages and disadvantages that didn't mean anything for other castes — nonsense and wit, courage, dignity, cowardice, and dishonour. A Brahman could easily get slapped, it didn't mean anything to him because he was clever. But, a Kshatriya, a warrior, had to pay such an insult back immediately. It's interesting that these types prove that there are no common ethics, even if we are talking about castes.

M: If they found a child, they hung a toy in front of him. If he was a Brahman, he just gazed at it. If he was a Kshatriya, he just grabbed it. And if he was from the third caste, he got scared.

D: Exactly. They used this method if a child was found in a forest and didn't know his caste. So they threw a toy at him, and for example a Brahman would just contemplate on whether it was a toy at all.

M: Maybe we should try this method again.

D: You mean show toys to everyone

W: Everyone will be Brahman.

D: You never know.

W: There is a saying that if a child looks up for a long time in church, he is going to live for a long time. But if a child doesn't look up, it means he is not going to be a centenarian. Elderly ladies used to say this. A pig is the only animal that can't physically look at the sky, its head is designed that way. If you turn it upside down, it dies.

M: Because of the shock?

W: It's something to do with their anatomy.

M: It'll get scared and die.

D: One should never try it out of respect for the pig. Didn't know that and I like it. I agree.

M: There is a fable about an oak tree that eats acorns and doesn't know that it deprives itself of the food source.

D: A true thing is clear at once. It's absolutely clear to me that the story about the pig is true. Some things need to be clarified, and some don't.

W: A person once approached a father to find out how cats appeared and said, 'Do you know that cats weren't around in the very beginning?' He didn't believe it and said that God created cats.

D: Yes, there are obvious things. One ancient book said that cats were not created from the very beginning. A cat jumped out of Leviathan's nostril when it tried to save Noah. So there is a story that Satan got on Noah's ark as a mouse through his wife. When they were in the sea, the mouse started gnawing at the ark. When humanity was on the edge of extinction, God sent a monster that sneezed and two cats jumped out and they ate the mouse. That's how cats came to be.

W: Where did the mouse come from?

D: It was Satan.

W: There shouldn't be a Satan, if they ate it.

D: Maybe they left something, but they fixed the ark problem.

M: Cats should eat something…

D: In our fairy tales, a cat is depicted as a snake and devil fighter, as their opponent. But sometimes a cat was a negative character because it was associated with snakes and the devil. There was a Stare-Eyed Cat who fought the Devil, but acquired his features and became a devil himself. He turned out to be the Russian heroes' enemy eventually. So, there is metamorphosis too. Are you scared of the cat? The Talmud lists types of deaths. The first one is being struck by lightning or by God's will. So there are 64 degrees of deaths. The last one is death because of a stupid cause. Like a brick falling on your head. It's the most idiotic one. The worthier the man, the nobler his death is: because of age or an illness. But when you are hit by a car…

Thus ended the last fireside chat. I now turn to the final lecture Professor Dugin gave.

The Logos of Eastern Europe

For thousands of years it was the border between two worlds: the Indo-European nomadic tribes of the great prairie and the settled culture. Slavs were formed as a people in this zone where the Indo-Europeans crossed the Dnieper that no one had crossed before. After crossing the Dnieper, they came across a very old population. Their language no longer lives. There is no historical evidence of them because the whole of history, even myths and fairy tales, was written by Indo-Europeans who came here by horses. Archeology and some hints in ancient plots show that there had been something before them because agrarian culture was established there. Let's imagine that these tribes became settled. It's quite possible, though no one has explained why it happened. We know that many populations are still nomadic. For example, the Turkic peoples or Mongolians, they still do not settle even if they don't move around much. They remain nomads.

Herodotus mentioned the Skolotoi or Scythian plowmen. They sold wheat in the 8th century. Scythians farmers can be compared to a flying cow because Scythians and farmers can't be mixed together. If you are a Scythian, you are a warlike nomad. If you're a farmer, you can't be a Scythian, because it's a classic Indo-European culture with livestock animals, war and nomadism. Many authors who studied the Slavs noticed that these Scythian farmers showed a resemblance to the Slavs' predecessors because they are Scythians (Indo-Europeans) on one side and farmers on the other side. In other words, settled Indo-European (Eastern Europeans) culture is based on superimposition. It's not that Scythians just started to plow because it's impossible. A nomad couldn't just get off his horse and start digging. There is no reason why. It's completely different if you conquered the land already inhabited by farmers. So you start to use them and you get used to them.

The farming tradition couldn't be created by Scythians and other Indo-Europeans; they could transform it, but they couldn't invent it. So there is an idea that before the nomads came from the great prairie, there was a different civilisation, Eastern European. It was settled and matriarchal. It was a matriarchal rural civilisation. Its centre was located in the Balkans up to the Carpathian Mountains and the Danube. Some areas were also included, like Western Ukraine. These areas (Dnieper's right bank, Tripol culture, Venichi, and Karanovo-Gumelnitsi cultures) were filled with female towns with Great Mother cults during the 5th to 6th centuries BC. Usually, they were located on the river banks. They were rural, and the women used only hoes instead of plows to cultivate the land. Women prepared the land. Women harvested too. A sickle is

a female symbol. They cooked too, while men were used as a kind of livestock. For example, they only asked a man to bring something. Men were the lower link. Life was connected with women. Not only did they give birth to children. Women did everything, they provided food and built houses. The great mother cult developed there. Nobody knew what people they were. These people were called Pre-Indo-Europeans or Paleo-Europeans (people of Old Europe). It's a common name. It was promoted by Lithuanian historian and archeologist Marija Gimbutas. She offered the term 'Old Europe'.

Let's look at Old Europe's culture. We don't know their language. We only know that it was a rural population with matriarchal religion; they also founded cities on the river banks. Lepenski Vir is the oldest monument that dates back to the 8th century BC. It's a place on the border of Serbia and Romania. A housing complex was found there. It had high-quality clay floors. The houses had triangle shapes open to the river. Modern houses have the same type of floors as ten thousand years ago. People who live there now use the same technique to make floors from clay that they get from the nearest river. Marija Gimbutas was amazed because the excavated buildings looked very modern. They were very neat with sharp corners and perfectly taken care of territory. They were located near modern socialist-style poorly made houses without windows and doors. You could see the influence of the civilisation, and that in fact they were built with care by women's hands.

Marija Gimbutas said that it was a powerful civilisation. People worshiped a goddess with the mouth of a fish. She was a fish, a bird and a woman at the same time. That's where mermaids, sirins, and *alkonosts* come from. Slavic folklore is full of these creatures. These were Paleo-Europeans who had a matriarchal culture. With the appearance of scary Indo-Europeans, everything changes. Angry armed men with horses, weapons, hatred, and aggression started to destroy these cultures, by burning down the settlements and enslaving people who lived there. By the way, their ceramics flourished, pots with unique patterns and choice of colors were skillfully made. They were totally perfect. But they were all destroyed and replaced with clumsily made pot-like products made by uncouth invaders. Their attitude was different. An exquisite, soft civilisation was destroyed and replaced with something harsh when the Indo-Europeans came with mounds, weapons and buried harnesses. No weapons were found in the graves of the female civilisation because their culture was peaceful. There were peaceful and warlike cultures. This is an interesting thing as there are two ways to go next. But, if we look at how Balkan matriarchal, farming culture spread across the rest of Europe, we'll find an interesting thing — the Balkans (Eastern Europe, modern Serbia, parts of Romania, Czech Republic, and Hungary) were the source of agrarian settlements across the whole of Europe.

So, the Pre-Indo-European population spread from the Balkans. Now the Balkans are the border between different cultures, between Old Europe and Indo-European Turan

(bearers of mound culture, including in England, France, and Spain). Agrarian settlements spread from the Balkans. But ancient Europe was populated by people from the Balkans. Venichi and Karanovo-Gumelnitsi cultures existed from 4000 to 5000 BC. Similar Paleo-European settlements in Western Europe, in Germany, existed 2000 BC.

Balkan culture was the source of the whole agrarian Pre-Indo-European civilisation. It means that the level of concentration of this culture should have been higher in the Balkans (Eastern Europe) than in the rest of Europe. Old Europe is the source of Europe. So the Balkans are considered to be the source of the civilisation in general. If we look in that direction, we'll see that this Paleo-European agrarian, matriarchal culture of the Old Europe spread from Eastern Europe to Western Europe, and much later it reached England, and the Celtic world, France and Iberia. The Celts are Indo-Europeans who came from Turan (much earlier than the Germans). Paleo-European culture spread from the Balkans. I'll explain why it's important. What is important is how the Balkan and Eastern European cultures developed including Slavic and Eastern European culture. The birthplace of Slavs is considered to be the area above the Carpathian Mountains. It's interesting, the birthplace of the Slavs is considered to be the Tripoli culture (right bank of Ukraine). The territory of Western Ukraine, where Dregoviches, White Croats, and Drevlians tribes could have been met, was the Slavs' motherland. So, Ukrainians, despite the strange things they say, are right when they say that they are the source of all Slavic culture because they stayed there. Everyone left, including us (we spread among the Finno-Ugric tribes), but the Ukrainians are still there — in Western Ukraine. So, they have a certain reason because they are where everything started, the place that everyone else had left, including the Serbs, Poles, Lyakhi, Polabian Slavs, Czechs, Eastern Slavs. The Ukrainians stayed on the right bank. Western Ukraine is the cradle of the Slavic World.

Eastern Ukraine (the left bank) is closer to us, to the east. The eastern bank is called the left bank. Eastern Ukraine (the left bank) has always been under the control of the prairie. They didn't go further than the Dnieper. The right bank of Ukraine is the source of the Slavic people. It was not even Kiev where everything started, but the area above the Carpathian Mountains because it existed long before Kiev. These were the Scythian ploughmen mentioned by Herodotus. Let's look at them closely. As we said before, there is a paradox. Scythians couldn't just turn into farmers. They didn't come to an empty territory and they didn't become ploughmen. They continued to be the warrior elite — the first and second caste of warrior priests. But the third caste of farmers got in touch with the local population, which was represented by a very ancient matriarchal agrarian Paleo-European society that existed many thousands of years before Indo-Europeans. It was called the Tripolye culture. So with time, as the mound culture moved in from Eurasia, they created a mixed type of culture. This type is the source, the sociological matrix of Slavic culture. Unlike other cultures, Slavs were the first where

this meeting took place, where a Scythian became a ploughman, when a nomad became a part of that symbiosis with that matriarchal, agrarian Paleo-European culture. That is the source of the whole of Eastern Europe.

The same thing happened in Germany, France, England, Italy, etc. Nomadic people came to find representatives of Paleo-European farming culture. They were Scythian ploughmen too in a sense, like Indo-European warlike nomads, representatives of Kurgan culture. They were ploughmen as Eastern European culture spread in Western Europe from the Balkan territory. So, the Balkans, which are generally considered as Western and Eastern, the Great Prairie's and Old Europe's periphery, is Europe's mother in fact. European civilisation came from the Balkans on both levels: the agrarian and matriarchal farming level (before the Kurgan culture came) and the level of the Indo-European warlike people, who represented the patriarchy, solar metaphysic and vertical Logos (which is similar to the Hindus, that's why there were so many similarities between Platonism and Hinduism; Plotinus could be considered to be a Hindu philosopher because the whole of Indo-European culture is based on the same vertical axis as Indian Logos or Iranian Logos)… We've talked about that.

Let's get back to the Slavs. There is an Italian author, Evel Gasparini, who wrote a book in three volumes under the interesting title *Slavic matriarchy*. What does it mean? On the one hand, Slavs didn't have a matriarchy because being a Slav means a patriarchal system and Indo-European society. But he gives his book the title *Slavic Matriarchy*. What does he mean by that? He means various matriarchal symbols, images, plots in different levels of Slavic culture (e.g. in fairy tales and customs), that prove that matriarchy existed in Slavic culture. That's very important. 'Slavic matriarchy' should be used in quotes because it's a kind of matriarchy. It's not a society where women dominate, nor where the chthonic principle is above any other principle. It's a society where tendencies that were before the Paleo-European culture are strong. They were also strong in Lykia and Lydia, as Johann Jakob Bachofen said. He was the first to develop the theory of maternal law. So, Eastern European culture presented itself as a fresh mark (a couple thousands of years fresh). But time is a very particular category. It was the freshest of all, I mean. It was the most ancient source as well, where Indo-European culture clashed with Paleo-European culture geographically and historically. This is the matrix of Slavic identity. It means that we've got a lot from the Cucuteni–Trypillia culture (a Pre-Indo-European culture that disappeared formally, but nevertheless preserved itself), which looked like an Indo-European solar patriarchal culture. That's what Gasparini means. So now we know the context.

How does Gasparini explore the culture? What is matriarchal about the Slavs? For example, a woman took part in the farming process, he says. Though nomadic people brought a heavy plough, a horse, and a bull with them, a woman couldn't handle that. An ex-cattle breeder became a ploughman. Women couldn't handle horses or bulls. The

Indo-European type of people were shepherds. Shepherds were the bearers of the Turanian heroic principle. It was a man's business. A ploughman took a heavy plough and cultivated the land. An iron plow was the highest level of technology, but women didn't like it, because it was a torture to the earth. It's like AI. A wooden hoe is a peaceful personal approach. Still, women took part in the farming process in some of the aspects, according to Gasparini. For example, in the harvest. It turns out that only women participated in the harvest of bread grains until the 20th century in Eastern Europe. That spirit was kept until the Bolshevik revolution and the invention of the combine harvester. There were only women who harvested.

Sickles were the only known tool. It shouldn't be confused with a situation when men mowed down the plants, because this was done to harvest hay to feed cattle. Men were connected to horses and bulls. That was their sphere of business. Men were given scythes that were the simulacrum of a sickle. A sickle is more important because it kills the stem. That was a woman's task. Women also pounded the corn. That's why windmills were another form of AI. They were thought to be the place where devils hid because it was a technological thing, while mortars and pestles were the usual tool to grind corn in a family context, not in an industrial context. Corn was tortured for a long time. It died when it was planted, then it was mowed and peeled off, crushed and burned in fact. It was tortured before it was turned into bread. We should look closely at bread's history; it's a hard way to go from grain to bread. Every step of the way bread was accompanied by a woman. When it was ground, when it died, when it grew, when it was killed again, when it was bullied, when it was burned. A woman followed every step of the way. The farming image was a kind of mystery with only women involved. Indo-Europeans got involved in the process by introducing ploughing instead of using a hoe to cultivate a field.

What else came from matriarchy? Garden heritage. Gardens that are common nowadays were a part of the matriarchal culture. A garden was a woman's heritage until the 20th century. A hut was a man's heritage. The difference was that you could sell a hut but couldn't sell a garden. A garden was a part of a woman. There is an echo of the special matriarchal law that protects women's interests through the garden. A garden was inherited from mother to daughter. It was inalienable property when a wife moved in with her husband because everything that could be planted and harvested was women's property. If we skip some of the details, the agrarian practice was a woman's responsibility, though it was slightly changed by men. Slavs were the ones who saved most of the charateristics of Pre-Indo-European agrarian labour and society.

The idea of the Great Mother (mother goddess) was misrepresented by Indo-Europeans, who gave her a negative tone. Baba Yaga is one of the classical images of the mother goddess. She lives in the forest, she owns life and death. She bakes children as if they were bread, but kids manage to slip away. She is never portrayed with a

husband. It is important that she lives alone without a husband. There are different interpretations of her image. She is great and scary under Indo-European influence. But she may be not that scary. She also flies like a bird using a mortar. Her broom is the symbol of tidiness. Combined, it allows her to be mobile. These are all symbols of the Great Mother seen by the eyes of Indo-European nomads with no sympathy. The Great Mother's image was edited.

There are a lot of other female images, like mermaids and *kikimoras* who live underwater. In forests we have *leshaikhas*. There were female *domovoys* (household spirits) and there were whole families of domovoys. They were awake at some periods of time. Female images are very strong in Slavic folklore. The female element is strongly connected to water. Many settlements were located on the river banks. That's where the drowned women cult came from. Drowned women became spirits who could come back later, sitting on the branches of trees. Usually, it was a sinister image that draws the attention of young shepherds who understand the danger but are still attracted to them.

There is one more image. Gasparini also likes the character of an idiot who often appears in Slavic fairy tales. A female interpreted a male as an idiot, according to Gasparini. A man is interpreted as a son (he may be a good boy, but he's still a boy, a child who doesn't grow old) by every woman. The culture of the Great Mother treats him like that, and it's not a bad thing. There is an image of a man not growing up in a matriarchal culture, but he has magic powers because no matter what happens he ends up well. First of all, he's a reflection of his mother, so she likes whatever he does — he walks, runs, and has pink cheeks. So the idea of an idiot is how the male element is seen in matriarchal culture. An idiot is a well-known positive character in Slavic folklore because he achieves things in spite of any logic. He is lazy and doesn't want to do anything. He falls asleep when a dragon or a monster comes. It's a hero's dream, when a hero falls asleep at the most important moment and a woman can't wake him up. Still, he wakes up sooner or later, and everything turns out well. A character who never grows up is well represented in female culture. Gasparini also thinks that Ivan Durak (Ivan the Stupid) echoes in Dostoyevsky's *The Idiot*, because he is the holy fool of 19th-century Russian Orthodox tradition. Anyway, these are different versions of the Slavic matriarchal culture's creature.

The Great Martyr Paraskeva in Russian culture is just a female figure (women usually spun yarn, which was their main obligation). One could get in touch with Paraskeva by means of spinning yarn. Women were not allowed to spin on Fridays, especially on the twelve holy Fridays that were marked in the calendar in a special way. There were a lot of bans. One had to approach a well saying special prayers and doing special rituals. Yarning had a special meaning too. There were a lot of important occupations for which Friday was responsible, like wetting flax, porridge cooking. Friday was involved in all

those activities. If one didn't respect her, it could turn out badly. Friday could get angry with women. So there are images of Friday, Mother, damp soil, women's practice and lots of female spirits in Slavic folklore. So it all proves that Paleo-European culture became part of Indo-European culture and kind of hid there. Officially, the façade of the culture belonged to men (man was the master, he could plough, own a horse, pay tax, become an official), but there was an interior understanding. But the peasants kept the aspects of a different mindset.

Indo-Europeans thought that everything that didn't belong to us was from hell. If we are heaven, you are hell. Paleo-European culture was different. They didn't have such a strict model. They didn't treat the Great Mother and its culture in a negative way. It wasn't a Satanic culture. It's a pre-patriarchal culture. They didn't understand the opposition imposed on them. The idea of the reconciliation of opposites emerged in this Christian (Slavic) culture. The image of a snake was demonised and became a part of every battle. All Indo-European people know about the snake-fighting plot. It's a well-known plot when a hero comes to fight a snake, a dragon or a monster. The same is in Indian culture: Indra fights Vritra. There is a character in Avestian culture — Verethragna. There are a lot of well-known characters. Saint George also fights a snake. A hero on a horse who kills a snake by a spear can be met in many cultures. When we come across Saint George's character, we have to understand that he is Turan (a representative of the Kurgan culture who invaded). It's quite easy to identify from a classical cultural point of view. But whom do they kill? Who is the snake? It's clear from a Christian point of view. But what about from a cultural point of view? It's not a bad creature from a cultural point of view. The thing is that it is an earthly creature, not heavenly.

The snake was worshiped in matriarchal culture, that's why it coexists with a woman, even in the Bible. Later a man comes to get an apple. In the beginning there is only a snake and a woman. It's a matriarchal pair. It's a male analogue of a female creature. The snake is a woman's friend. As a useless element, it is killed by a hero (all the women belong to this warrior who came from Turan). He kills his competitor to conquer a woman. When he kills it, everyone turns into Scythian ploughmen. The snake is unwanted. A snake-fighting pattern comes from it. It's interesting that there is a snake fire wolf in Serbian folklore. They are Slavs who inhabited the Western part of the Balkans very late. Serbians and Bulgarians are Southern Slavs. It's an interesting creature. A snake visited a princess. It's a common plot for Russian fairy tales. Princesses act differently. Some of them try to fight, some try to hide these visits, some rebel. According to the Serbian legend, she decides to get rid of the snake. She is scared to tell her husband about it, so she finds a hero. What's the name of this hero who kills the snake? It is 'Snake The Fire Wolf'. To fight a snake you need to ask another snake. It's very logical. That's how Bulgarians see *zmaj*. The word *zmaj* exists in

Bulgarian, but it's not a snake. It's a flying warrior. He's like a prince from a fairy tale, but a flying one. He has wings in his armpits. So he looks like a normal person because you can't see the wings. But when he needs to save someone or a village he shows that he can fly. These are the Bulgarian ones. The Serbs have Snake The Fire Wolf, which is a snake that comes to fight another snake. So it's a matriarchal idea that a snake can only be defeated by a different snake. You don't have to be against all snakes, just against a bad snake. So, there is a bad snake that can be fought by a good one. The image of a snake is decided, according to matriarchal interpretation. It's preserved through Snake The Fire Wolf or the Bulgarian zmaj. There is a bad snake that has to be punished for its misbehavior. It's an important mythological plot. So the snake is treated ambiguously. There is no such thing in Russian fairy tales, but Southern Slavs in the Balkans see a snake as a dual creature. There is a bad snake and a good snake that protects everyone from the bad one. There is a similarity to the bronze serpent in the Bible. Moses created it to save the Jews from snakes. Do you remember? He created a bronze snake to scare off the bad snakes. It's an ancient theme because these matriarchal complexes existed in different places, different cultures. But the Slavic one is one of the most ancient from the archaeological point of view.

There are two places where Indo-European patriarchy and Paleo-European matriarchy mix together. These are the Balkans and Anatolia (modern Turkey). We talked about it earlier. The Cybele cult came from there. The Balkan Cybele can be seen clearly through the Slavs from an archaeological point of view. That's the reason for Slavic matriarchy. There's another very interesting creature — the vampire (ghoul). It symbolises that there is no death, the earth (soil) doesn't kill but heals. One should bury a man, and he will resurrect. The earth is life. The cult of the earth (not heaven) means that people are born from the soil, like seeds and plants. They go to the soil and come back again out of it. Let us exclude the meaning of sky, which is important in Indo-European culture. The sky brings souls via the sun-father god (Greek *Zeus* or Latin *Deus*). Scythians hated old people and they treated them badly because they thought they were cowards (a person should have died earlier if he had been brave). Death was a great thing for the Scythians because it only meant returning to the heavenly father. There was no need to repeat that because you lived your life here, fought the snakes, and destroyed everything. One could only dream of that. There was no need to come back, no soil, no vampires, because you would be cremated so you could leave forever though fire. That's what Indo-Europeans thought. It was an Indo-European patriarchal model.

According to a matriarchal model you lived and died, and were then born again. You are put in a coffin, then you get out of it again. And you never really go anywhere. It's a permanent circle; the idea of a returning predecessor, a returning dead person who doesn't go anywhere. He comes back after he is put in the ground. It's impossible to die, the earth was like a sphere of life. The earth was not the end, it wasn't a place to rot. It

was a place to rot and resurrect, like a seed. When a seed is put in the ground it rots, but it comes up and gives a wonderful ear of rye. And it repeats this forever. The same is with a person when you bury him. It didn't mean that vampires were everywhere. The vampire fairy tales and culture appeared in the Balkans and in the regions of matriarchal culture where Slavs settled. The word 'vampire' comes from the Russian (Slavic) word *upyr* (ghoul). The practice itself and the legends about dead people have Slavic Eastern European origins. Later from Slavs it came to Hungarians, Romanians, Valakhs. This legend is probably even older. It may be Paleo-European, not Slavic. The vampire idea is an older version of this legend, which proves that there is no death. After being born, a person goes to the grave. Later he comes out of the grave. But if he is too annoying, he could become evil and drink blood, etc. But in general, it was an image of a predecessor, who resurrects many times with each generation. It reminds me of a Chinese model which I spoke of only in a Slavic context.

There are two holidays in Slavic culture because of it — Dmitrov Saturday in the middle of Autumn and *Radonitsa* in the middle of Spring. They represent a kind of escape from, as well as an entrance into, the underworld. Winter was considered to be the underworld. Slavs in general and Slavs in Eastern Europe celebrated these two days. English and Celtic cultures also have these holidays. The model repeats itself. It's replicated even in German culture among peasants. The difference is that in Slavic culture this tradition is clearer, more vivid, and more archaic. It's not a unique Slavic feature. The brightest and sharpest images come from Eastern Europe though. Eastern European structure is a mixture of formal patriarchal society with Indo-European language and informal reinterpretation of all these elements from the Great Mother culture's point of view.

If it's true that there is an Indo-European language, an Indo-European vertical and an ancient cult of female agrarian matriarchy mixed together, and Scythian ploughmen (ploughmen are matriarchal Paleo-Europeans, Scythians are patriarchal killers of Kurgan culture), and a patriarchal agrarian society, then we are dealing with the Logos of Dionysus on a societal level. Because in Eastern European Christianity and culture, in its peasant agrarian aspect, we deal with a mixture, with patriarchal and matriarchal origins. We are not talking about the confrontation of these two models, but about their adaptation to each other. And Dionysian Logos is perfect as an intermediary between the Logos of Apollo and the Logos of Cybele. Therefore there is no such thing as Slavic matriarchy, as Gasparini said. There has never been such a thing, nor have Slavs ever been matriarchal. But there are vivid signs of pre-Slavic matriarchy in Slavic culture. But they are never alone. There are no Slavic supporters of the Great Mother alone, or the Snake, for example. Usually we come across a complicated mixture of matriarchal and patriarchal origins. The secret of Eastern European Logos or Eastern European

agrarian culture is in the mixture that defines the essence of Slavdom. That was a structural introduction to Logos.

Let's discuss some interesting historical ideas. There are different types of Eastern European Slavs. There are two branches (lines) among Eastern European Slavs that separated very late: Western and Southern Slavs. If we pay attention to the language, we'll see that people of Western, Eastern, and Southern Slavic languages understand each other well. We can easily understand Czech and Serbian. These languages are close and they separated not so long ago. They are not like Celtic and German languages that are too far away from each other, so no one can understand a single word, or Armenian and Russian, for example. Armenian is an Indo-European language, but we won't understand a word of it. Slavic languages, however, are quite the similar. It means that the separation took place at a later time and our predecessors lived together in Western Ukraine for a long time. Our predecessors lived in the western part of Ukraine and partly in Belorussia (a bit to the North, close to Polotsk, Gomel) and partly in Romania and Slovakia. Western Slavs went to the West and North from there. They are called Lechici (Poles) or Czechs and Polabian Slavs that vanished but left their marks in German culture. Slavs settled along the Baltic sea and up to Denmark (Northern Germany's territory near Mecklenburg and Pomerania; Germans assimilated local citizens). Many German last names, especially noble ones, have Slavic roots because Slavic princes were the core of the Mecklenburg-Pomerania aristocracy. Prussia is a different story; they are Balts and we are not talking about them.

So, there are Western and Southern Slavs. What's the difference? Southern Slavs are Bulgarians, Serbs, Croats, and Slovenians. Western Slavs are Poles, Polabian Slavs (who disappeared), Czechs and Slovaks. Czechs consisted of Moravians and Czechs. So, Czech is a general name. They were Western Slavs. Some types of Slavs had their own Slavic aristocracy, some didn't. Most of the Slavic population were farmers. But Western Slavs (Polabian Slavs) had their vivid aristocracy with names and so on (Slavic princes). Poles (Lechici) had the same princes. Local Czech clans came from the peasantry and matriarchy. Czechs had the idea that they were ruled by three sisters. One of them, Libuše, who judged while lying. Czechs were not satisfied by her judgments, so they decided to marry her to someone. She read fortunes and said that she needed to find a man who worked in a field. So they found Přemysl who married her. But she told her people that they didn't know what they were doing because she did everything right, took the right decisions, and didn't force anyone. She said everything was going to change when the king came, and that he would take everything from them and punish them. He brought golden bast shoes (which are the symbol of the Czech dynasty) with him as a reminder that the princess had chosen a simple ploughman.

The point is not about Slavs, nor about their mythological history, but rather that Slavs (Czech predecessors) kept connections with the ancient pre-Slavic population

that lived there. It's a special case for the Czech aristocracy that comes from Libuše and Přemysl. Přemysl is a disturbing name because in Greek it means Prometheus — the one who thinks ahead — who is an ambiguous character who escapes hell (Tartar's abyss), serves gods, steals fire, and gets back to hell. He is a Titanic figure. There are no Titanic stories about Přemysl, but still his name is suspicious.

Bulgarians have a completely different history. Bulgarians are Slavs who came from the right bank of Ukraine. They started to spread when the Huns and Pannonian Avars invaded eastern Europe. So Slavs participated in the new waves of nomads from Turan, but this time they weren't Indo-Europeans. Huns and Pannonian Avars were of Mongolian and Altai origin who came from the Eastern part of the prairie. They invaded Eastern Europe, like the Sarmathians and Scythians did before. The leading Slavs liked the new wave of nomadic people, new invaders, so they went on to conquer everyone else. They had axes and imagined that everything including their enemies was a forest that they had to cut down. They were clearing their territory for the land to be ploughed. But soon enough Slavs got out of control. They lived on their territory for a couple thousand years in peace. But being permanently attacked, they developed a warlike spirit and captured huge territories from Denmark to the Adriatic Sea.

The whole of Eastern Europe (when the Huns and Avars appeared there) was populated with Slavs. There were some of the Avars' tiny fortresses in Transylvania, Romania and Panonia, Hungary, but for the most part there were Slavs. It's a mystery how, but they populated everywhere. Eastern Europe was filled with Western Slavs in the North and Southern Slavs in the South. Slavs started to create their own enclaves and territories of different faiths. Southern Slavs (Bulgarians) were Sclavenis (one of the tribes). Soon they were under the control of the Bulgars (a Turkic nomadic Turanian tribe who were warriors), who came to the territory of Thrace, made an alliance with or conquered Southern Slavs and captured Greece's territory later. Southern Slavs went as far as the Peloponnese at some point. So there were even Slavs in the south of the Peloponnese. Slavs got whatever territories they could get. Their leaders were nomads from Turan, but as a mass of people they were uncontrollable men with axes who destroyed everything in their way. Later many of the Southern Slavic tribes assimilated. The Knights of the Cross, who created the Latin empire in the 13th century by capturing Constantinople, came across Slavic tribes who didn't obey anyone in the northern parts of the Peloponnese. They still had axes and didn't recognise anyone's authority. So, the Slavs spread across huge territories. The whole of Eastern Europe was populated with Slavs. It happened very fast during the 6th, 7th and 8th centuries. They came out of nowhere and populated Eastern Europe.

What are the differences between these types? The Bulgarians created their own state, which spoke a Slavic language under the leadership of the Turkic Bulgars. The word 'Bulgarian' means 'owned by the Turkic people'. In the beginning, the aristocracy

spoke a Turkic language and called themselves khans. Later they became Slavic, started speaking Slavic, and accepted Christianity. They were the first among Slavs to create the powerful kingdom of Bulgaria. Slavic Turks were the elite. Most of the population were Slavic farmers.

There was a country called 'White Serbia' in the north-western part of Eastern Europe (modern Germany where Sorbs live, north-western part of the Czech Republic). The Serbian people lived there. Now they are called Sorbs; they are their descendants. Some of those Sorb tribes moved to the Byzantine Empire, and the Emperor used them against the Avars and offered them the territories in the western part of the Balkans. That's how the Serbian states appeared.

What are the differences between the Serbian and Bulgarian people? The Bulgarians didn't have an aristocracy of their own. It was either destroyed by the Turks (Bulgars, Slavic elite), or it didn't exist at all, and they were like independent clans. That's a common feature for Southern Slavs. But why did the Serbs have generic nobility? The Bulgarians were mostly peasants and had their peasant mythology, while the Serbs acted like warriors (purely Slavic, purely Serbian). To understand the difference between the two types of Southern Slavs, we need to trace where Serbs came from (as well as Croats who are close to them, because they came from White Croatia, which is in the west of Ukrainian territory; Serbs came from White Serbia in the German territory, from the north, in two waves).

If we look at the Western Slavs' culture, who only later came to the south, we'll see that it was full of princes and aristocratic clans. The Polabian Slavs lived in the territory of modern Germany, partly Poland, Pomerania and Prussia. This culture was warlike. How is it possible that the Slavs had a warlike culture if they were farmers mostly? Most probably this nobility wasn't pure Slavic, but Slavicised German or Sarmatian. Later it became the Sarmatism ideology in Poland that explained the origin of the Western Slavic elite (except the Libuše story and the origins of the Czech dynasty) as ancestors of the Sarmatian tribes. Geographers called this territory European Sarmatia. It's quite possible that this nobility (including Polish, Polabian, and Baltic elite) had Sarmatian roots because if Slavs were farmers they couldn't have had their own nobility. So this Sarmatian or German nobility (usually they say that Polar tribes had German nobility) turned Slavic. The same as the Varangians who had different names after three generations in Kiev (at first they had pure German noble names like Rurik, Oleg, Ingvar, Igor, Helga, Olga, later they had Slavic names like Svyatopolk, Yaropolk, Vladimir while keeping their German dynasty untouched, and only then mixing with other peoples). Kind of the same thing happened to Polabian Slavs and Lyakhs (Western Slavs) earlier, who assimilated German or Sarmatian nobility into the mass of agricultural Slavic peoples.

Serbs kept their noble clans; unlike Bulgarians whose aristocracy had Turkic origins, there couldn't have been any other, though it has Slavic names, but with Turkic origins in terms of dynasties. They even had the term proto-Bulgarians to identify the Slavic population and Turkic nobility who came there with the Asparuh khan. There is a story that they weren't pure Turks, that they were mixed with Sarmatians because all the Altai prairie nomadic people had not only Turkic cultural origins but Sarmatian (Indo-European) too. Anyway they were warlike nomads. That is what is important. White Serbia where Serbian ancestors (the so-called Unknown prince) came from had representatives of their culture where the number of noble clans was higher than anywhere else. This is important. Modern Sorbs are the only thing left of White Serbia. And everyone acknowledges it. Polabians were warlike, they were farmers with warlike nobility, who worshiped horses, lances, swords (not very Slavic elements). Sarmatian, or Sarmatian-German, or purely German clans were the basis of Western Slavic noble families, including the Slavs who moved like Serbs to the south.

At some point Pannonia, Transylvania, former Dacia, Podunavye, the Baltic shore and the Balkans up to the Italian border (the Adriatic) were populated with Slavs who established their Eastern European civilisation. Eastern Europe could be identified with Slavs. They lived there not the whole time. At first they were like a tiny spot at the right bank of the Carpathians. Later they spread all over (including Anatolia, Greece) with the Huns and Avars. So, the Slavs expanded. Western Slavs expanded to the north, and Southern Slavs to the south of Eastern Europe. They displaced all the peoples who lived there before them (including modern Albanians, and Dacians — modern Romanians, Vlakhs, and Moldavians). Hungarians came a bit later. Avars and Huns were just small elite groups. The main population of Huns was also Slavic and the Hun empire was also Slavic. Though the elite had Altai, Mongolian, and proto-Turkic origins. The Turks were one of the Hun tribes. Its language is unknown, but there are three words left of the Hun language, and all of them are Slavic.

At some point the Slavs conquered the whole of Eastern Europe and moved all the other peoples. They created their own Scythian ploughing culture. I already described its meaning.

The process of Christianisation was different for different people. Bulgarians were the first to accept it. Soon enough they demonstrated amazing skills, for example they translated the Bible into Slavic with the help of the holy Slavic teachers Saints Cyril and Methodius. In accordance with the Christian spirit that didn't forbid translation, they immediately created a thing that could have taken thousands of years. They translated the Bible into the southern Slavic language that we use today. It's not Russian, nor an ancient Russian language. Our predecessors never spoke it. It was an artificial language that was created by the Slavic teachers Cyril and Methodius to translate the Bible for Bulgarians and the Moravian kingdom (the modern Czech Republic), which

couldn't decide where to accept Christianity from: Byzantium or Rome. There wasn't a strict separation in the 9th century. There was one, but not strict. We can't say they were Orthodox because there wasn't a pure Orthodoxy. They were either Greeks or Bulgarians. Cyril and Methodius came from Thessaloniki. Their school was in Moravia where they worked on their translations. It was even before Russia. Eastern Slavs were only a historical project. They were busy with their own thing. Most probably they were ploughing. That's when the Bible was translated into Old Church Slavonic. It was created with all the terms at the same time. Cyril and Methodius' work was admirable. It could take a few years or decades to find a single term for a religious Greek word. And they found and created all the words to describe these religious things. Can you imagine how great that is? That's why he is called Constantine (Cyril) the Philosopher. Only a philosopher could accomplish such a thing. He was a great philosopher because if he couldn't find the words he created them. Not only did he create the writing, he created the language for a complex religious model. That deed has no analogies. Let's imagine what was done. It's shocking! That was a religious, spiritual deed. They did a lot of other things too. They served and evangelised. They were into politics and Church politics. So Bulgarians gave us the Slavic translation of the Bible. It was a big deal. We owe Bulgarians a lot because they created the Church language and translated the liturgy. They created a great tradition which became crucial for Orthodoxy, I mean for us and Serbs.

The creation of the sixth patriarchate is very interesting. Soon enough during the first kingdom, after accepting Christianity and translating the Bible into Old Church Slavonic, the Bulgarians thought well of themselves, because they were strong; they conquered everybody; they had great cities and gave others lots of important things. So they thought that the real Roman Empire (the Katehon) was the Bulgarian kingdom. The 'Moscow is the Third Rome' idea was Bulgarian initially. The First Bulgarian kingdom ruled by Bulgarian kings that were influenced by Greek and Slavic culture said that they needed their own patriarch. It was the first case in the Orthodox world when an additional Bulgarian patriarch was acknowledged (it was the sixth patriarchate; there had been five of them before). Because of their military power, the Bulgarian patriarchate was accepted. While the Byzantine Empire was getting weaker, the Bulgarians thought that they were going to take over the Byzantines' mission and the Katehon's functions. The Bulgarian kings weren't called princes like ours until the 16th century; they were tsars, like emperors or caesars. They had their own patriarchate. Finally, because the Constantinople patriarchate was a late event (though it happened earlier than the 6th century, it was late compared to the Roman and Alexandrian cathedras, which were the initial patriarchates). Their patriarchate was unique amongst the others because it was the first Slavic one. It was the first non-Greek self-proclaimed patriarchate in the post-Constantinople age. It was a grand thing. The Bulgarian Church

is a great phenomenon among Slavs that predicted what happened next in the Slavic world. Later the Greeks used the Eastern Slavs. The Greeks managed to conquer the first Bulgarian kingdom. Their patriarchate and kingdom were banned immediately. The title of tsar was removed too. Bulgaria was separated by the Byzantine emperor Basil the Bulgar Slayer. The Greeks were awake; as soon as the Bulgarians were sucked into their inside intrigues, they attacked them again and again. The Bulgarians came back from time to time. Soon enough the Bulgarians created the second kingdom and reestablished the patriarchate and Katehon (while the Greeks had to retire historically).

Bulgarian history is very interesting. It was like that until the Turks came and put an end to the Greek empire and the Bulgarian kingdom. But the example is interesting because we think that it was us who had imperial functions in the 16th century, while in fact the Bulgarians were the first ones who took over the empire. We weren't the second either, because Saint Sava and the Serbian princes of Rashka (Rashka is part of Serbia) wanted to establish their Serbian patriarchate in the 14th century. They had the 'Third Rome' idea too. They proclaimed themselves the Katehon. The Serbian monarch, Stefan Dušan (Dušan the Mighty), and his dynasty conquered the Balkans and Mount Athos, where they built their monasteries. The Serbian Empire didn't last for a long time. They conquered the Bulgarians too. Byzantium was a small spot in the 14th century while the Serbian Katehon was established. Russia was on the periphery of this process. So the Serbs proclaimed themselves the Katehon, the Third Rome. So, the first one was Latin, the second was Byzantine, the third one had to be Serbian, which is Rashka. Kosovo is the cradle of Serbia. It has always been populated with Serbs. I mean when they came to the Balkans. Thracians lived there before. They were displaced by the Serbs. The rest of the Thracians are Vlakhs who can be found in Serbia and even up to Croatia. That's a different line.

Croatian history is interesting. If we talk about the Croats, they are close to Serbs. They have the same language. But they came from White Croatia to Western Ukraine. They formed a Galich identity, princedom with Buzhanians. The White Croatians settled like the Serbs. They lived together. But they were located in the west and were influenced by Italian politics. Croatian bans were partially Orthodox and partially Catholic. The more they separated, the more they took the Catholic side. So, there is no cultural difference between Serbs and Croats (Catholicism ignored any national language, there was only the Latin *missa*). Croats weren't simple Catholics. Croats had their Glagolitic script, developed by Saints Cyril and Methodius. The Croats had a unique Glagolitic ceremony. So they were Catholics who insisted on using their own Slavic language. Among Catholic countries they are unique because they fought for keeping their Glagolitic ceremony. They lost it at some point, because there were two waves of Croatian bishops (some were in favour of the Glagolitic ceremony, others were in favour of the classic Latin *missa*). The second group won. But after a few

hundred years the Glagolitic ceremony came back. So the Croats fought for their national Slavic identity in spite of Catholic universality. It's interesting that the Poles, Czechs, and Slovaks didn't do that. They didn't try to implement anything Slavic in terms of religion.

Who were the first Slavophiles? We think that the Russian Slavophiles of the 19th century were the first ones. But they appeared in Croatia in the 15th to 16th centuries. Mavro Orbini (a Croat who wrote in Italian) wrote a book about history's mystery. It stated that the Slavs were the only nation that gave life to other people and languages. They were everywhere and always. The Byzantine Empire and Roman Empire were created by Slavs. The Byzantine emperors were Slavs. All the languages came from the Slavs. So, that's Mavro Orbini's idea. He was a Croat. Other Croatian philosophers started to develop this idea, that one should look at the Slavs through Slavic eyes, not Greek, Latin or German. It's historically naive, of course. A Slavophilic idea soon emerged that the Slavs are the best. And our history was falsified. The Croatian Jesuit Juraj Križanić came to Russia in the 17th century to tell them that Russians should conquer everyone and unite all Slavs under Russia. He developed a common Slavic language based on the Russian language with Serbian, Croatian, Polish, and Bulgarian elements. It was a kind of Pan-Slavic language that he used to write books. The Russian government sent him into exile. He spent fifteen years there and barely survived. He even met Avvakum in his exile. All the great people met each other in exile in Russia. But still, he influenced the Slavophile mindset. That's where I should stop because we have no time. That's it for my intro on the Slavic Logos.

Chapter 4

Autumn

Introduction

This chapter contains our final interviews. And while we did, by and large, stick to familiar topics, these conversations were perhaps the most forthright, introspective and mystical of them all.

The scene is Moscow amidst the tumbling leaves.

October 15

N: Have you had much experience of Switzerland, Alex?

D: I was there for a short period of time, in Fribourg. I spent one or two days there, not too much. But I like its concept of federalism. There is a balance between the German and Celtic identities, between Protestantism and Catholicism. That is a happy solution for Europe. The federal version doesn't insist on French or German nationalism. That is a way to solve problems. It's a good example for Europe.

N: And also for Russia, as it is a federation. And as you said, there are many competing Logoi in Russia as well…

D: No, it is a federation, but it's different. For Europe, it's an example of an alternative Europe. Only a pure and really European country is out of the EU. It's symbolic. There was a very interesting author, Johannes Althusius, who developed a kind of federalist vision that doesn't exclude empire. It is a federal empire, which is very flexible, and has laws for different lands, regions, localities, and communities as well including religious, ethnic, local issues. But it has a united vision on the strategic level, so not on the level of the small communities or middle-sized regions. It is the federal government that is occupied only by strategic decisions. So, the Tsarist Empire was something similar to this, but not exactly. We need something like this now. But I'm against nationalism of any kind, including centralisation. So, this concern and care of the federal government about the smallest regulation of local life is quite negative. In that sense as well, Switzerland's example is useful.

N: But some people would say that Switzerland doesn't really feel like one coherent country with one language and culture, it is more like three or four different countries

within one. And indeed, Switzerland often finds it difficult to make grand strategic decisions because of the power of each canton and its direct democratic system. For example, it is said that even if it decided to join the most powerful political organisation in Europe today (the EU), its current political system (of direct democracy) would have to be totally transformed. And that is also partly why, for better or worse, it remains a neutral country. Something I suspect other federations would not be too keen on.

D: Yes, but it is normal. It is good because there is minimal cohesion strategically, politically, and they can come to some common political decisions, for example concerning their non-participation in the EU, or in implementing some national laws. And Italy was the same. The north was one thing, the Latin middle was another, and the south was the third, and there were many other local differences, like in Toscana, Veneto, Reggio Emilia, and other parts. This is the last remnant of the Middle Ages, of this kind of regional difference and an absence of a nationalistic unification of the political space. So, your remark that there are different countries inside one is excellent. Nationalism was very artificial and violent in the 19th century. It was a kind of modernistic revolutionary idea. I think that fascism was the continuation and logical conclusion of this artificial Italian nationalism. I think that the Lega Nord party is in favour of federalisation. This is a completely new vision as well an old one, it is post-nationalist, federalist and traditionalist all at the same time.

N: But if, for example, Siena or Florence already have their own identity on the level of the city-state, what do they need the larger Italian body for?

D: Because you cannot defend a city-state alone in the present condition, you need some kind of cooperation on the strategic level. You can not be sovereign on the level of the city-state. You can be free, you can be independent and autonomous, but you cannot be sovereign. So, some kind of national unity is necessary in order to grant sovereignty, but on all other levels they should be left alone in order to create social structures, including law.

N: Of course, one of the problems of this federal union on the national level is that it generally entails the transfer of resources from the richer parts of the country to the poorer parts, as in the case of Italy where the rich northern regions are forced to give up a significant amount of their money in order to support the poorer southern regions. This, to some extent, evens out the balance of resources in the national union, but it often fuels resentment between the regions.

D: Yes, but now it is done by national violence and pressure, it is not consensual. And in a way, that is the reason why Lega Nord is so popular, precisely because this is done now against the will of the people of the north and without any necessary explanation, and without active democratic participation. It is a kind of national imposition from the government and it is precisely this that cannot be tolerated. It is

anti-democratic, but in the context of a federal Italy it could be consensual. So, it should be explained, and the people of the north should have proper privileges for financing the south. The south is completely dominated by the mafia. And the people of the north look at the mafia in the south, the migrants and their complete absence of any respect for the north, and they think that is a disaster for them, because they are obliged to pay and support this southern criminal system. So, in order to convince the north to continue to support the south in a federal version, you need to improve the situation in the south. But with a nationalist unified centralist government you are not obliged to do so.

N: Still, how does the local government in the south, which, as you have stated, is overwhelmed by local corruption, sort this out?

D: If they stay corrupt, they will lose financial help from the centre and the north. So they will be forced to be purified, otherwise they will be finished. So it is a kind of logical self-adjustment of the system. And a republican national central government always creates these kind of conditions for the flourishing of corruption.

N: And would this method for defeating corruption work in Russia?

D: Russia is the same. The corruption and hyper-centralisation of power over small details is the same. So, corruption grows when, for example, a bureaucrat has the right to decide how much of a crop you should take from some land, that is, when everything is decided on the highest level. Corruption is combated when things are delegated to the lowest level and then everything will be self-adjusted precisely because everything will be transparent. You choose the people you trust, you choose the leader or you support the person that you think is really worthy and not just imposed on you by the centre. So, I think decentralisation is the best way to solve many problems of corruption also in Russia. It's my idea that urbanisation is the most negative process in general. So, decentralisation also means de-urbanisation. People will go to camp and live in the field, in the villages, and that will be as well a kind of weapon against corruption because you don't need anybody living there, no authority.

N: Nevertheless, there was still a lot of corruption back in the pre-industrial period, when most people lived in the countryside. So, villages can be corrupt as well but on a smaller level, of course. And you don't need to have decentralisation in order to combat corruption. For instance, if you look at the UK or some of the Scandinavian countries they have combated corruption through transparency and accountability.

D: I think that transparency and accountability are very good things but when there is a strong federal government it can always manipulate and bias this accountability and transparency. For example, when democracy is applied on the global scale, it is oligarchy. When democracy is applied on a small scale it is real democracy. I am in favour of direct democracy against representative democracy, because representative democracy is not a democracy. If accountability and transparency are really possible on a small scale, because you can create the real means, the instruments for that, and that is

not so difficult because everything is here, everything is already transparent in a small community. The community is precisely transparent because of its unity. Unity is something that is united and organic. When you come to a more complex system the relations between decisions, fulfillments, and controls are complicated as well and it is very difficult to get real accountability and transparency there; a complex system cannot be really transparent because you don't understand how it works. But on the level of the small community, a rural community first of all, everything is transparent and accountable.

N: Even so, who is enforcing transparency and accountability on the local level? You could just have a very charismatic leader on the local level who could be just as corrupt but on a smaller scale of course.

D: Yes, but if it is on a small scale, it could be easily improved. For example, if there is as small charismatic leader, he is not *der Führer*, he is not Hitler or Stalin; he could cause damage, but the damage would be small, on the level of a village. And if it was noticed that something was going wrong with some small village, that some crazy charismatic leader or a sectarian fanatic had gained too much power, he would be isolated. So, it is easy to check this problem on the more local level. But if this happens on the scale of the nation state it's almost impossible to check because he is the judge of everything on the globe. And that is the danger of globalisation; if we had a transparent and accountable world government, it would be good, but there are no guarantees it would be so because it could easily be transformed into a tool of some dictatorship. So, corruption happens when the laws, judicial system and tax system are going to the top. When you collect everything, you orient everything to the top and control from the top upside down, so you create a kind of ambience for corruption. You can get corruption on any level; it will appear. But if you control only a very isolated process from the top and allow the local community/society to follow its own way, it will diminish the volume of corruption. Corruption is always possible but I think that in centralised states, empires and national states, corruption is inherent, it's natural, something embedded in this system. So that is why I like Switzerland and its direct democracy and anarchism as well. A small community of people working in villages in very loose, and very flexible relations with others would actually install very good relations, you could make exchanges, you could be interdependent, or you could be completely independent. In any case, everything should be decided on the ground.

N: What is it, do you think, in human nature that drives corruption? What does it stem from? What is its root?

D: I think that mechanisation is absolutely the root driver. And it is possible only in a mechanical organisation. When you have an organic organisation or organic world there is no corruption, for example, in an animal's life. There is violence, there is a kind of power, there is hunting, there are predators, but there are no *corrupters* and no

corruption. Corruption is purely human and purely mechanic. In an organic society there is no place for corruption.

N: What do you mean by organic society?

D: I mean, for example, what is called 'folk society' by Robert Redfield[31] : a small organic collective of people living together, united by ethnic traditions and sharing together the same values, habits, and historical experience. A traditional patriarchal village is an example of that. In the village corruption is by definition minimal, because there is no place for it. Corruption begins when the village is embedded in a more complex system, when there are tax collectors, laws and judges imposed on them by masters, for example, feudal masters. In that situation you try to corrupt tax collectors, judges, masters in order to solve a case or a problem. When the organic collective of a village is fully autonomous, there is no place for this. You cannot corrupt your neighbour because it would be completely clear to everybody else. So, here there are pure human personal relations. It is interesting that in Russian language there is the word мир (mir) that means three things: peace, universe and peasant community. That's all the same in a unique sense. It is not three homonymous words; it is a unique word, with a unique concept. Where the community is, there is peace. And this peace is not local, it is global in a local way. So there is a kind of village universe, a peasant universe that is totally universal and peaceful.

N: So, this is your diagnosis of corruption on a systemic and structural level. What about on the level of an individual? What drives the individual to become corrupt as even on the systemic level there could be an individual who will just revolt against this community spirit? Where do you think the ultimate root of individual corruption is?

D: An individual is corrupt when he insists too much on being an individual. In doing so the conditions for corruption and mechanical organisation are created, because an individual is a kind of mechanical detail. And when an individual is part of the whole thing or some community, it is not fully individual, it is an individual with certain qualities, morals, traditions, and with some participation in the common cause. The community is always right. Every community is always right and every individual is always wrong, because an individual is just a part. Indeed, the concept of an individual is Luciferian; it is a part that wants to be the whole, it is a revolt against the whole. And the reason or the cause is the devil, because the devil is the same. Individualism is satanic. But in any man there is an individual side and that is precisely the sin. Sin is individual and the opposite of sin is something common. For example, in Russian monastic tradition, there is a very interesting idea that our sins come from the devil but our good behaviour comes not from us but from God. So, if we behave in a moral way, it's not our personal acquisition; it is a kind of gift. If we don't sin, it is not our will, it is a gift from God. And if we sin, it is not our fault, it is the devil that inclines us to sin. So, there is a kind of total absence of individualism. When we insist on being

individual, we try to identify ourselves with the devil because he was the first to revolt against the whole order of things.

N: Well, some might argue that it is rather dangerous to say that each man is not responsible for his own sin. Indeed the principle of man having free will to choose between doing good or evil is at the root of Christianity. And why is each man uniquely made then? Do you think each man is unique?

D: Yes, unique, but what is uniqueness? It's only a combination of secondary aspects. So, there is nothing unique in us; we pretend to be unique but we are completely the same. We are like mechanical details of a machine and our uniqueness is purely negative; that is, the distance from an archetype. The archetype is what is really unique in us and it is common as well. So we are unique in the measure by which we differ from this archetype. So, that is completely negative. And the closer we are to this archetype, the less individual but more unique we are. So finally, what is unique in us? It is our humanity, our active and ontological belonging to humankind, which is not given. It is a goal to be human. We are not so much human, but rather we need to become human.

N: I recall that we did already touch upon this subject at the beginning of our discussions, but it seems appropriate to mention it again now in the context of what you just said. What value do you put on an individual human life, if, as you say, an individual is not particularly important?

D: Individual human life becomes interesting when it represents the fight against individuality.

N: No, what about the loss of an individual life, what does it mean to you?

D: That is the best thing. If we lose our individuality that is the goal of a human being, especially, for example, for monks.

N: No, I mean the death of an individual, what does it mean to you?

D: That's a great achievement. Death is precisely our hope and our argument. Being mortal makes us really free and it provides an open possibility to overcome our limitations, it is a completely positive act — the limited nature of human life. Because if we become immortal individuals, we will be incarnated machines and devils. And that is precisely the goal of modern civilisation and humanism plus.

N: But, you could also say that there's no individuality whatsoever about robots, as they are all the same. So, if the West is pursuing that, why are they also encouraging hyper-individuality in people?

D: Quite the opposite, robots are pure individuals because just like individuals from Western society, they pretend to be original but they wear the same clothes, use the same machines and the more individualistic they become, the more robotic they are. So, real totalitarianism coincides precisely with liberalism. And totalitarianism and liberalism are the same because the more we pretend to be individual, original, the more

totalitarian we are. For example, if we consider modern Western society, everybody is absolutely equal to one another, with the same iPhones, the same relations, completely as a kind of pure repetition of the same. But an individual is distance from the archetype. Robots are so distant from the archetype and they're individualistic in that sense precisely because to be an individual is to be absolutely equal to other individuals. So individuality is a pure loss. And I think as well that the concept of the individual in the social sciences is a little bit behind natural science, where the sub atomic, sub individual levels were discovered already with quantum mechanics. I think now quantum mechanics is applied to sociology. When the concept of the individual is revised. For example, in post-modern sociology it is the sub individual level, for example, the affirmation of the existence of the machine of desires. The machine of desires is purely the root of individuality, but it is mechanic. So to be a robot and to be individualistic is the same, it's not the opposite thing. It seems that a robot is equal to the other and an individual is not. The difference between one individual and another is precisely in their belonging to different collective identities. So these are the programmes. If you put the same programmes in robots, they will be equal; if you put in different programmes, they will be different. But that is the programme, not the robot. A robot is individual and neutral. So, I think it's the same as an individual man. Individuality begins to be different when it acquires collective qualities, not individual. For example, political parties, religions, historical common lands acquired or not — it's not important. But, when an individual acquires something that is not individual, it becomes different from the other. When an individual is a pure individual, when an individual has no collective qualities, it is a robot.

N: Still, from a Christian perspective when you die and you face judgment, you'll be asked about your individual sins and good deeds, etc. So on that very deep and profound level you are not being asked about what political party you joined, or which country you were from, but about who you were as an individual and what you did. In that sense we are all individuals and not just members or parts of collective groups. How do you respond to this?

D: These are different things. This has to do with the soul. In that case, I agree the soul is different but in modernity…

N: But, surely that's the root of modernity's conception of an individual. It comes from the Judeo-Christian idea that every individual has a unique soul, not a collective soul.

D: Yes, but when we are speaking about modernity and postmodernity, the concept of the soul itself is eliminated from the very beginning. So, the real question is if we accept the existence of the soul, as we could not use it as a metaphor. Either we accept the soul, and then we are in Middle Age Christian theology — this is one thing that is

completely against all that is modernity — or we are using the soul as a kind of metaphor for individuality and that's a completely modern way to understand the soul.

Our conversation on this topic paused for a moment as we approached a particularly enchanting part of the forest. Inspired by the sheer beauty of the falling golden leaves our discussion briefly turned to matters of nature and poetry.

N: Do you have a favourite season, Alex?

D: Yes, autumn.

N: Why is that? What does it mean to you?

D: It's difficult to say, it's so Russian. Pushkin, our greatest poet, loved autumn more than any other season. Because it's beautiful, Russian nature… yellow, red, golden trees.

N: Do you have a favourite poem of Pushkin?

D: Not so much. He's the most famous poet. He is considered to be the person who started the Golden Age in our culture.

N: Building on from our earlier discussion about the individual, where do you stand on the great questions of free will, determinism and fate?

D: It is difficult to say. For example, I strongly believe in free will but this freedom should be understood not as something on the individual level. First of all, we need to define what the subject of this will is, what the profound nature of this free will is. I think that the man in us is really free. But the man in us isn't the same as the individual. So the man in us is the most profound level of our being here, of our existential presence. He is a kind of archetype; he is free and we are not because we are 'would be man', 'would be human'. We should become human. Humanness is not something that is taken for granted. We need to conquer the humanness within us and in doing this we discover what liberty is and what freedom is. But when we avoid doing that, when we identify human as individual, we make a great mistake that is precisely the error of Western civilisation. Louis Dumont, a French sociologist, explained this in a very nice way. For example, the most individualistic, in some ways, religion and culture that glorifies free will is the Indian Vedic culture. It affirms that the inner self is absolute — Atman is Brahman. But, at the same time, the inner self is not the same as the individual self, as the little self. It is the great self. And in order to get to this core of humanness in us or to the radical subject — I call it the radical subject — we need to overcome individuality, we need to go deeper than our deepest level. So, we need to be awakened, we need to arrive at some point in us that transcends individuality. If we do that, we are free and we have a free choice and our will has the greatest power that could define the future, the destiny and the ontology of events. We could become makers of our own destiny. But, if we stay on the level of individuality, we're absolutely

defined by social, organic, cultural, epistemological conditions. And we only dream about being free, but we are embedded in destiny, and in irreversible, predefined preconditions, the consequence of events. So we are not free because the individual cannot be free. Only the inner self is free. We could solve this problem not in the sense of Catholicism or Protestantism, because both are wrong in my opinion, but only Orthodox Christian anthropology based on Hesychasm[32] and monastic tradition is right. That is precisely how this problem of the free will is decided in the context of the mystical Orthodox tradition. The fault or the error of Catholicism is accepting free will, but putting it on the individual level. And the error of Protestantism (in particular Calvinism) is denying free will and not recognising any other level but the individual. So for them, logically, there cannot be free will. It is destiny or predestination in Calvinist tradition. I think that the most important thing is to return to this difference, a basic difference of understanding of anthropology that is explained very well in the Indian tradition. There are two levels of humanity: the inner self, the greater self and the little ego. And they are opposite. One is free, the other is not. One could define its future and the other, the little ego, is completely submitted to the mechanical laws of cause and effect. And Dumont says that Indian society on the external side is based on the idea of predestination and the hierarchical caste system. But, its mystical and metaphysical dimension is based on transcendental individualism and they don't exclude each other; they coincide. So, this society is based on ritualism and the recognition of the absolute free nature of the transcendental self. The problem of the West is to mix and confuse these two dimensions and to affirm free will where there could not be free will, or to deny free will and this inner dimension of man where it should be accepted. It is a kind of methodological problem. There are two beautiful books by Dumont, one is called *Homo Hierarchicus*[33] and the other is *Essays on Individualism*[34] , which are very important to me because they are key to understanding the problem of the dialectical relations between a holistic approach and an individualistic approach. We know that there are two branches of sociology: one based on the realistic approach, Max Weber's concept and theory and the followers of him, and the other is the holistic approach of Durkheim. In the concept of Dumont they can be reconciled, if we make this distinction between the two levels of human nature. And I think that this is also the idea of the Russian Orthodox mystical tradition because it is very individualistic in the case of monks. And that is why the monastery and monks represent a very important, maybe central, anthropological institution. It is not on the periphery of society, it is in the centre of society. Because only in a monastery, in the Orthodox Christian Hesychast monastic circles, is there a place where the real anthropological problem is solved in practice. And the kind of *theosis* (becoming God) that is the concept of Orthodox Christian tradition and the freedom that a monk gains in his practice is a divine freedom; it's not human freedom. But to be human precisely in the ultimate sense is to participate in this

divine freedom, divine will, which is the same, which is the synergy between human will and God's will, and which gives real freedom. And on the other hand in normal life, political life, social life, we should follow the strong rule that leaves no place for individualism. We should be a ritualistic, symbolic, sacred society, recognising this holistic nature for the community. And they don't exclude each other; they are different, but they can coexist because they are on a different level simultaneously. Monks are on the one side, on the other side is everybody else, including priests because priests are not monks in our tradition; they are part of a different type of humanity. So, I think that there is a freedom on the transcendental level and there is predestination or some kind of social, cultural and historical determinism on the level of the exterior aspect of human life. An individual is mechanical and the inner radical, profound, transcendental self is organic and free.

N: Well, those are undoubtedly very profound points on the philosophical and spiritual levels, but on a practical level, how does your theory work? For example, think of Oedipus; it is said that he was fated to marry his mother and kill his father. He tried to avoid this destiny but failed. So, on a practical level where did Oedipus' freedom end and the fate he was bound to fulfil start?

D: I think that the figure of Oedipus is so important and central for Western culture because it is a kind of confusion of both levels. It is a sign that Greek thought at certain moments, at the time of tragedy, could not separate anymore the two aspects of human nature, the transcendental one and the individual one. So, there was a tragic destiny in the family of Oedipus. It was a heritage of the past and that heritage was a kind of destiny imposed on Oedipus and individually he could not revolt against it but the sense of strategy that he felt in a very radical way was a kind of injustice for that. It is not his fault that he committed such sins. In order to overcome this determinism of the family, of this negative destiny of his ancestors, the only way is to come to the transcendental dimension of human nature. It is precisely this confusion between two levels of real freedom (transcendental freedom and mechanical determinism of imminent existence) that creates this confusion and is the source of Western culture that is based on the absence of the clear separation between these two levels. And Christianity (that is, Christ) brought this transcendental dimension. So, precisely in the Oedipus story we can see a kind of impasse in European humanism without this religious dimension. Oedipus is unthinkable in Christianity because in Christianity, Christ is this transcendental man and the radical self. So, belief in Christ, the whole hope in Christ, is precisely the way to overcome destiny, to overcome the causes and effects of this chain of events that is precisely a very important factor in our life. But from the Christian perspective, we cannot overcome this by ourselves; we cannot save ourselves by ourselves and we are obliged to be under the logic of destiny, as precisely in the case of Oedipus. Only Christ could save us and only Christ could install in us this transcendental way out of it — the

way of real freedom and salvation. Oedipus is not a Christian figure; he is a pre-Christian figure that precisely shows the lack of imminent humanism that was pre-Christian in Greek culture and that was restored in modernity, in the post-Christian period. But Christian theology and anthropology and Christology give us a possibility to solve the Oedipus problem because he could be Christian on being converted. Oedipus could seek the pardon of sins, not only his own sins, but the sins of his family. That is a kind of illustration of what a radical sin is in Oedipus' history. Man is doomed to be outside of paradise and to be under destiny, under the causes and effects of the sins committed by his forefathers, as was everyone after Adam. But Christ liberated us from them. In the Indian perspective there is no transcendental saviour, but rather the transcendental self in us. It is a different way to solve the same problem. I don't want to say that there are similarities between Christianity and Hinduism, but that the solution to the problem of Oedipus typologically is similar in both cases. We could not solve this problem relying only on this imminent human individuality that is precisely under the power of destiny. And to overcome destiny is the same as to overcome *samsara* in Hinduism or radical sin in Christianity. So we need to appeal to some other level in the human constitution. That is my opinion.

N: Still, what about on a more basic everyday level. For example, today you chose to wear a black coat. Did you consciously choose to do so or was it already determined; that is, you were destined to wear that coat?

D: Absolutely determined because I don't have another coat. It is purely mechanical; it is not a free choice, it's a mechanical choice. So, I try to pick something that fits the circumstances best. A machine could do that. Now there are even cars without drivers. They choose to go or to stop. There is nothing free in that. So it is purely realistic mechanical actions and behaviour. It has nothing to do with real humanity, with real freedom and real choice because the choice of my coat or pants is based on autumn. And autumn depends on the structure of time and I'm embedded in that. It is not freedom to choose from two options; for example, if I only have one coat, there is no option at all. So I could have a coat suitable for autumn's conditions or not have a coat at all. But I will be cold and catch a cold. There is no choice. So there is less choice than what animals have. Our society is absolutely determined. For example, I have a choice to have a fifth or sixth generation iPhone. It is not a moral choice; it is absolutely laughable to reduce liberty to having one thing or the other, to choose from different kinds of cheese and so on. Real freedom is something else; real freedom of choice creates time. Real freedom is not under conditions that are defined by something external. Real freedom creates worlds. In the Gospel, it says that faith as small as a mustard seed can move mountains. So, real freedom is like this. If we really believe in God, we could change the world absolutely. It is completely different for us to choose.

N: Ok, maybe that was a trivial example. Let's take a more classical moral case to explore the practical implications of your grandiose and profound idea of freedom. There's a train racing along a track and it soon comes towards two separate paths. On one path there is one person tied to the track and on the other path there are twenty people tied to the track. You have only two choices — either to pull the lever to change the train's course from the twenty people to a single person, or to do nothing. Which do you choose? I know that even in this case, things are still conditioned by time, physics, etc. But there is certainly a Christian moral dimension to this choice (that is, do you get actively involved in the situation and sacrifice one life to save twenty or do you stand back and let events take their course trusting in God's judgement), which is beyond the purely mechanical robotic choice of a blue coat or a black coat. In this case, do you accept there is a kind of free choice here?

D: No, if we follow all the situations, we immediately discover that we have no choice. We could choose the optimal path to get to our goal. But, our goal is defined by the conditions of our life, our life is defined by the imposed conditions of our society. Say, for example, freedom is good or you have free choice, you believe in that and so you are completely enslaved by this belief. Any situation is, as Wittgenstein said, 'Sprachspiel'. We could not think, we could not choose, we could not define or describe the situation without concrete situations, relations, rules. We don't create these rules, we don't create these situations; we participate, we follow them and that is purely mechanical. It is a logistical problem to choose one path or the other. Everything is pure calculation. And that makes artificial intelligence possible. I believe that artificial intelligence is quite possible precisely because our human intelligence is artificial. What is natural is stupidity. When we try not to be stupid, we become more and more artificial because we acquire some practices, agencies and some knowledge, some algorithm, more than knowledge, more than the storage of some facts. In that sense, reason is mechanical. What is not mechanical, what is really deep in us, is something that transcends this level of mechanical choice that is completely based on pre-established protocols.

N: But, what about the freedom to commit a sin? That's what St Augustine talks about when he talks about freedom of will. On that level do you think we are free or, again, is this just a mechanical choice defined by society, knowledge, calculation, etc.?

D: Sin is precisely the concept of the inner self. It is quite opposite to crime because crime is something that is imposed on us from outside. While sin is our judgement of our behaviour. So, morality is absolutely inner. For example, if nobody knows that we have committed a crime, there is no crime because crime is juridical. If there is no fixation of the crime, if there is no judgement or court session, there is no crime. So you are completely free to kill someone, provided nobody knows about it. You didn't commit a crime because a crime is juridical. It is a fact that is certified, and approved, and

judged, and considered. While sin is completely different. It is our appreciation of ourselves; that is, our inner understanding of ourselves and it is based on freedom. So nobody forces us to recognise a sin as a sin. It is our free will. That is the transcendental aspect of morality. And in Russia, there is a strong distinction between the senses of more or less the same words: *pravo* (law) and *pravda* (truth). But they are opposite because *pravo* is a formal appreciation of someone's behaviour. You could be judged by the law and that is a formal decision of the society or the collective. And *pravda* is something hidden, something inner. So, you judge yourself on the level of *pravda*. And you are judged by others, by society, by the collective opinion on the level of the law. The root is the same; that is, 'right'. But, the meaning of these two concepts are quite opposite and that is precisely the difference we speak about. I think modern society, modern Western society, liberal society, is based on confusion of these two; the difference between law and truth, the inner and outer. So the concept of immanent and transcendent are mixed and confused and that creates a perverted type of society and culture. When we try to put liberty and freedom in this society, we destroy the society. When we try to impose social rules on the inner ideological or idealistic level of the human, we destroy this inner dimension as in totalitarian and liberal society because in one case we destroy the holistic structure, in the other we deny the deity of the radical self in the totalitarian systems. So modernity is based on the wrong conclusions, precisely with the denial of Christianity as the basic, theological, metaphysical foundation of Western society. And that is not by chance, it is not casual, it is deeply interconnected because Christianity gives at least the possibility of distinguishing between these two levels; take, for example, the case of St Augustine and his division between two cities. We should accept both, we live in both cities and they are opposite and different. So what is good in one city, may be not so good in the other. We need to combine, we need to be dialectical in that sense, we need to distinguish causes from effects, including in anthropology. So, the unity of men is a kind of goal. It is not something given, we need to unify both cities. And that is precisely the concept of the Holy Empire in the Russian Orthodox tradition; to unify Church and state and not to recognise the autonomous logic of the state, or the autonomous logic of the Church, but to put them together in order to unify the poles, not to mix them or confuse them. I think that is the most important problem of modernity. Modernity has put on the same level what belongs to different levels.

N: Still, doesn't the idea of the unity of Church and state go against Christ's saying 'Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and unto God the things that are God's'? In that statement, some would argue that he separates these two spheres of life, the civil and religious. And, for example, a careful look at the lives of the Borgia popes of the 15th and 16th centuries would show you the potential danger of uniting these two powers in one person, the Pope.

D: I agree but the unification in the concept of the Byzantian Orthodox Church was precisely without confusion. So, in the phrase you've cited, Christ gives to Caesar what belongs to him and to God what belongs to Him, so there is separation and unification. There is no confusion between these two authorities in the Orthodox concept. Church and state are a symphony. The goal is to give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar, and to God what belongs to God. So, it is the unification of something that is separate; it's not confusing. The emperor is not the patriarch or the head of religious power. And the Pope tried to grant himself imperial status as well and to declare his kingdom the Katehon. But in the German Empire the status of emperor was restored, and was stolen from the Byzantine Empire because at that moment it was governed by a woman. The idea is to separate and unite at the same time the two cities; the City of God and the City of the World, and to have Caesar and God separated but united. That is precisely the idea of the empire, to have a symphony: two different souls, unified. They are different but united by this end to give Caesar what belongs to him and to give God what belongs to Him, and united in this Christian concept. That wasn't the case in the pagan empire but at the same time the Christianisation of the Roman Empire was precisely the fulfilment of this formula of Christ that was the reunification of both

N: Even so, there are numerous examples in both European and Russian history of when this symphony, as you called it, simply failed. Two examples come immediately to mind; in the case of Russia, the fight between Tsar Peter the Great and Patriarch Adrian, and in the European case, the famous strife between King Henry II of England and the Archbishop of Canterbury, Thomas Beckett. In both cases, the problem was that the civil power didn't want to remain separate, but tried to interfere in and control the religious sphere as well. So, in theory the symphony of power might be a good idea, however in practice it very often failed.

D: Absolutely, I agree. I think that was the end of any real Christian politics; it was post-Christian, secularised already. And I agree that the realisation of the norm, the ideal, the principle can always be damaged in practice. But we should not blame the idea, we should blame the implementation of the idea and that is always possible. And I agree, the history of Orthodox Christian thought was a fight against the perversion of the beautiful principle of the symphony or a fight against the usurpation of the Church's authority. That was the case of Nikon in Russian history. For example, that patriarch tried to impose his will over the Tsar, but the response of the Tsar was as well very destructive because Tsar Alexei Mikhailovich dethroned Nikon and almost destroyed the Russian Church by the implementation of Greek rites. And now we have the same problem after some centuries. So any kind of disturbance of the balance with either a shift in power to the political authority or to the Church authority is dangerous because it could destroy the symphony. When we see bad examples of the symphony we should criticise them as bad forms of good principles, and not blame the good principles.

N: But at what stage do you consider that an idea has failed? For example, if it is simply unimplementable, when do you go on to the next idea? Perhaps it's a methodological question, but the fact that this idea has been tried now for so many centuries throughout Europe and Russia and the conclusion of history seems to be that this system was impossible to successfully implement, hence modernity's rejection of it. I mean, if humanity itself just seems to be incapable of implementing this idea maybe we should move onto another idea.

D: Or maybe we come to another humanity because this humanity destroys everything that it touches. No, I think that is precisely where the problem is. So when we see bad implementation, we blame the principle behind it. And when we blame that, we do not have implementation, but precisely a new principle. And that is the error of modernity, which tries to put the blame on the principle of Christianity or the hierarchy of the state, of the sacred world vision, and to exchange that with quite opposite principles and an opposite system of values. But after that, we began to criticise modernity because there was bad implementation of these so-called good principles.

N: Thus, one could therefore conclude that both systems have failed in some ways.

D: No, I think we could compare the failures, but we should compare the principles. I think that the principles of traditional sacred society were good and just…

N: Ok, but at what point do you draw the line and say 'okay, after centuries of widespread experience, they have failed and proven to be largely unimplementable'? And on what basis do you judge that these principles were good; why should they be continued?

D: No, they were discredited; they didn't fail in the measures we think about. Modernity was a kind of revolt against them. For example, when one opposing elite tries to overcome the ruling elite, he blames them for technical failures, but there is a kind of hidden agenda behind that. The counter elite that has not got the possibility to participate in power, blames the existing elite for being bad, incompetent, corrupt and so on. But there is the will to overcome that. So, modernity used some failures of traditional society, the Middle Ages or Catholicism, but the principles that modernity installed were much worse than the principles that they had overcome. The new counter elite was much worse and the principles were worse, but they used some failures of the previous elite in order to blame them, and to demonise and discredit traditional society. They used some examples of bad implementation and tried to replace the debate on the principles with a kind of political knowledge in order to discredit and demonise them. We see this nowadays and modernity is based on fake news. For example, one fake piece of news is that traditional order doesn't function well. It was not concrete. In some situations it functions well, in other situations it doesn't function well, so it depends. But, when you choose only examples where traditional order doesn't function well, and you put them together, you create fake news. You don't mention something that

contradicts your opinion, and that is completely biased. Modernity is something biased. Modernity is not a natural response to the failure of the old order. It was an idea to destroy the old order in favour of the new one. For example, if we compare the values of tradition and the values of modernity, they're more or less completely voluntaristic. So we could choose one or the other; it is a question of taste finally. And we say the new order is naturally, ontologically better and the previous system didn't function. We make fake news a political campaign. That is the political campaign of modernity. And post-modernity discovered this, that modernity is based on a lie, based on the malfunctioning of the system that pretends to be better than the old order. So, modernity is based on a lie and it tries to show itself as something logical or some kind of destiny, or the logical consequence of progress. This was the wrong concept, which was the central concept in modernity; whether there is progress or not. So, the old is worse than the new. And that is self-sufficient, autonomous logic that could prove anything. If you accept progress — and that is a modern idea — you are already programmed, you are a kind of robot. If you accept progress, then old history, old time, and the old order will be forever worse than the new one, and you could defend any kind of value by saying it is a new value. So please accept them because they are new and they are better. The newer the better — that is the logic of progress, which is as well based on nothing, just like the logic of eternity. For example, what is eternal is good. This is our traditionalist logic. So, I think we could install a kind of balance here. For example, one can think that the newer is better, that there is progress, and the other would choose to believe that the eternal is better than the temporary. And it is precisely the problem with the old and new order of things or traditional, sacred, religious Christian tradition and modernity. Modernity tries to impose itself as destiny, as something inevitable. There is only the one law of progress and there is no other law. This is just like in Islam, 'There is no God except Allah', and for modernity there is no law except progress. And if — like conservatives and traditionalists — you don't believe in progress, you will be marginalised and considered to be a barbarian, an unenlightened troglodyte. That is the religious nature of modernity. Modernity is based on religion, not because it functions better. Modernity sometimes functions well and sometimes very badly, just like tradition. We cannot compare what is functioning well or badly because both function well and badly, it depends. Bad or good depends as well on the principles. If we compare, for example, how the principle of the symphony of the authorities in power was implemented in history, we see that sometimes it was a great success and sometimes it was a catastrophe. It is the same with modernity. Sometimes when comparing it with the principle of modernity, democracy worked well; sometimes like now with globalisation, it doesn't work anymore even when comparing it not with traditional order, but with its own principle. But if you believe in progress, you say that it is functioning badly, but nevertheless it is better than the old traditional religious

order. But if you don't believe in progress, it is a blasphemy in the modern world. If you say I don't believe in progress — you're finished, you're stupid, you are a totally delayed and retarded person. You should be re-educated, if you don't believe in progress. You are a monster, like Hitler. Maybe it is you who killed all the Jews and Slavs and Europeans because you don't believe in progress. It is a kind of crime precisely as not believing in Allah is in Muslim society; if you don't believe in this you are finished. So we are dealing with dogmas. I think we choose from that and we defend our dogmas not because they are right, but because we love them, because we are choosing them, because we are in favour of them. We could defend the Islamic *shahada*[35] in spite of everything the West or communists or liberal progressivists say. And we could choose modernity and defend modernity as a dogma. That is a possible choice. We could stay on the side of Christianity and Orthodox Christianity, the Russian symphony of power and tradition — that is our choice. So, that is my perspective, and we cannot convince the other or play the game of convincing the other. It is political technology, a kind of propaganda, hypnosis, suggestion. It is something, I think, that has nothing to do with philosophy. A philosophical conversation is a kind of exchange of concepts. You should not agree with or deny anything, instead you should take into consideration the concept and try to understand how it works, how it is linked together in one or another philosophical or theological, religious or secular system.

N: That may be, however I think there are also some methodological complications inherent in both. The pragmatic logic of modernity is to realise that there are mistakes and to try to fix them, thus things are always moving and changing. But traditionalism doesn't acknowledge that there are mistakes or even pretends to fix them because it is stuck in an unmoving and unchangeable eternity. Who defines eternity, and when did it begin? Those are other questions to consider. And this is perhaps one of the reasons for the failure of traditional society, because people said, 'Don't question why that didn't work, that is just the way we have always done it. So we must keep doing it like this.' Whereas modernity says, 'Well, actually if you do it like this, if you study this, if you research how it can work better, then things will improve and move forward.' But at the same time I agree with Tolstoy who said that progress is like being on a ship that is being blown by a constant wind and is always moving forward, but when someone asks you where you are heading, you have no idea. This is a key philosophical problem of modernity today. So you're absolutely right. But then on the other hand, as I said before, with traditionalism you're potentially stuck in a bog and unable to solve problems. So, both have these methodological problems inherent in them.

D: Yes, but I insist there is a choice. We are not obliged to accept modernity as something inevitable. So we can make a choice to accept it or reject it. That is precisely because to choose modernity or tradition is not an individual choice, it's not a question of what kind of coat to put on, rather it is a historical metaphysical decision made by a

Radical Subject. So, modernity and tradition effect the deepest level of ourselves because they reflect a paradigmatic choice. And I don't agree with the idea that tradition cannot adjust itself. Eternity isn't possible in time; it is always transcendent. So everything that is in time is a little bit corrupted already because it is in time and because it is not eternal. Our orientation to eternity is an everlasting adjustment of time to the example of being in time, and so eternity is corrupted. And the corruption of eternity in time is never accepted as good or as something that we should conserve. We should not conserve it; we should try to restore eternity, to find eternity, to refresh eternity. Eternity is always fresh, eternity is not the continuation of the same; it is a discovering of the unending, everlasting divine life.

N: So, it is always moving?

D: We are moving.

N: But our progress towards it is moving, yes?

D: No, in the traditional understanding, we are falling from eternity, we are getting further away from it. The distance between us and eternity is growing and it demands more and more effort in our life in order to return to eternity. So we go out of eternity and fall. Time is a kind of radical sin and not a kind of progress; it's something completely opposite. We should make time something other than it is, and that is precisely why when Christ was baptised the river Jordan went in the opposite direction. So that is precisely what we need to do. We need a kind of revolution of time. We need to direct time in the opposite direction. We need to transform it because time is the default and we need to return. Time is a radical sin and we need salvation. We need to transform the nature of time and to bring time closer to eternity. By itself, by inertia, time is quite opposite. Modernity declared this fall as something positive, and that is pure satanism, in our opinion, the opinion of traditionalists. In our traditional view, history is a fall and the distance is always growing and so to stay on the same level (the same distance from eternity) is very difficult. It demands more and more effort and our implementation is harder and harder and more and more difficult. Finally, the moment came when we were falling into time, and that is precisely modernity, when Christianity could not hold anymore. Modern Christianity is perverted now, it is so far from its true region that it has lost its life and is in a state of agony. It is a tragic tragedy, a catastrophe. And we understand modernity as a catastrophe, but in the eyes of Satan it's quite the opposite. It is a kind of progress that is very good, time is good by itself, and history goes in the right way. This was precisely the most important problem. It is not about its functioning, it is about the principles. If we accept eternity, we have one picture. If we don't accept eternity, we are completely immersed in time. If we don't accept any other kind of being or ontology outside of time and put everything into becoming, then in our eyes it is the devil.

We continued walking but fell into mutual silence as we contemplated these topics. A short while later the silence was broken with the rather mournful sound of a nightingale.

D: From time to time with my son and daughter I make music and I suggest that maybe some of that could be a part of the film. For example, one song is in English and is dedicated to autumn. It could fit into such beautiful location.

N: Perfect. What sort of music is it?

D: It's different, it's a mixture of dark jazz, bossa nova and electronic music.

N: Is that your favourite sort of music?

D: I like bossa nova, Latin jazz, dark jazz, minimal jazz.

N: Do you like classical music?

D: I listen to it, but I'm not a big fan. I prefer post-modern music.

N: That's ironic, isn't it? I would have thought that traditionalists, like yourself, would have found that type music to be rather satanic…

D: Yes, but I think it is not a problem whether it is satanic or not. I think that it has a kind of correspondence to reality. If satanism describes reality, we need to deal with it because it is a kind of language. But, I also sang in a church choir, not now but some years ago. And for many years I participated in this singing during Christian mass in our church. This singing is not classical, but a spiritual kind of prayer. We don't use the word singing in this context. Nevertheless, I like post-modern music.

N: So, in your view, modernity is not all bad?

D: When I was in Brazil I told my friends that I think that the worst hidden secret was that Dionysian religion is not modern. Let us consider the texts of the original bossa nova in Portuguese, not in English because many Brazilian artists translated poems into English with a completely different meaning. For example, in the original Portuguese poems there were many appeals to Christ, and to the Gospel. It is not the music it looks like. If you listen, they are singing not about emotional things, but very deep theological things. It is a kind of parallel religion that is very special and very particular for Brazilian society where there are Christian topics mixed sometimes with Santería (a kind of voodoo, Brazilian version of African traditions) and they are in harmony concerning the spiritual concept of the soul of the dead. Everything is put in very easy music in the form of pop culture and everybody thinks that it is only superficial, but Brazilians understand that it is something completely different. I've had many conversations about that, about the religious symbolism of Latin jazz, especially bossa nova and Brazilian music. And there were extremely nice examples of social criticism and poetry in Brazilian music. For example, some poems of the ex-diplomat Vinícius de Moraes were used as the texts for many songs of Brazilian composers, and they are on the level of Rimbaud. They are beautiful, absolutely beautiful, they're so paradoxical,

they're so multi-level, symbolic — simply works of the highest level of poetry. Originally, I thought it was very easy, with simplistic texts with no sense, similar to Anglo-Saxon texts. But, there are also psychedelic texts in Anglo-Saxon music, for example, I like King Crimson very much. So, I like when there are mythological topics with very beautiful, interesting, paradoxical, surrealist poetry.

N: Do you write mystical and mythological types of music yourself?

D: More philosophical or ironical.

N: How many songs have you written?

D: Some discs. I have released only one, but now it is not a problem.

N: And what instruments do you use or is it just singing?

D: Singing, but also guitar, and different electronic instruments. But, I pretend not to be a musician behind this group. The group is called 'Betelgeuse'. There is my son, who is playing there, and Dasha as well plays flute and sings. There is a kind of dark jazz tendency, an electronic form that is like bossa nova, it's special. I'm making a kind of post-modern interpretation of jazz or bossa nova. It's not bossa nova, bossa nova is inseparable from Brazilian culture and from that special time in the 60s and 70s. Now there could not be bossa nova. So it's not bossa nova exactly; it is a kind of post-modern ironical use of some topics.

N: In a Russian sense…

D: Not so much, there's not so much Russian. There is a kind of tendency, a dark wave in general. I think it fits into those categories and some electronic versions of jazz melodies.

N: So, your taste in music is not so Russian then? Some might say that true Russian music is found only in the work of its outstanding classical composers who are perhaps the greatest soft power assets of Russia.

D: No, I personally don't like Russian classical music too much. But I still consider it to be great. The composers were absolute Slavophiles, all of them, and not Westerners or liberals.

N: Still, they were certainly influenced by Western classical music, in particular by Italian and German music.

D: Yes, but they adjusted it to Russian mythology, Renaissance. There were conservative evolutions. And there was no liberal Western composer, every one of them were…

N: Even Tchaikovsky?

D: Yes. He was less engaged in political ideology, but Tchaikovsky was patriotic as well, not him personally, but his music.

N: And you have lived in this very cultural city of Moscow all your life?

D: Yes, but in the other parts. It's a huge city. This winter I'm going to China to give lectures for a month and I'm very impressed by their great interest in promoting

geopolitics and the philosophical approach. They study Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. They offered me the chance to live there with very good conditions.

N: Which city is this?

D: Shanghai. Before it was a Russian academic's dream to teach in London because of the high income. But now there are Chinese pioneers. And their proposed conditions exceed the normal Western rate.

N: But now you are just teaching there for a month?

D: Yes. I'm teaching there for a month, but they offered full time.

N: Would you like to do full time there?

D: No, but if everything is okay, maybe I'll arrange my agenda to go there from time to time.

N: Like a visiting professor?

D: Yes.

N: So, you would need to be supervising PhD students…

D: Yes, I work in that capacity at MSU. I have prepared many PhDs.

N: Even now?

D: Yes, I will be occupied by lectures for students, professors and a general audience. I'll be supervising some PhDs. It doesn't take that much time. I can do it easily, I have the experience. One thing to know is whether they are really interested in my topics. That's the problem with the Chinese. We had 200 Chinese students in our faculty, but they paid no attention at all to the process. They didn't know the language. They didn't understand anything in sociology. They just spent time here, in Moscow. Maybe the Chinese Communist Party paid for them. But it was absolutely useless, an absolute catastrophe. When I went to Shanghai for the first time, things were totally different there. They are more perceptive. Maybe they are sending the worst students here and the best ones go to the West. Here they don't understand anything at all not because they are stupid, they just lack motivation and interest. There is a very important term in alchemy, 'Terra Foliata', which means 'the ground is covered with leaves'. This is the symbol of gold, philosophical gold and the final phase of a great work.

N: Ok, well, speaking of philosophical gold, let's turn to Thomas Aquinas, one of the great Catholic philosophers, who was famous for trying to unite faith and reason. Where do you stand on the spectrum of faith and reason? Are they completely incompatible? Should they be completely separate?

D: I'm on the side of Aquinas and I'm a radical enemy of Averroes, who tried to separate faith and reason. I think that reason should not dominate faith, faith is above reason. It is interesting that, for Russians, there is a classical opposition between reason and faith. There is little sense because of the word 'faith' in Russian — *vera*. The European origin of the word *vera* is the same as *veritas* — 'truth'. Vera is something you are sure of, not a belief in something that is probable, it's not a guess. Vera is

something taken for granted. And reason is some kind of battle with certitude. In our understanding, faith is a metaphysical truth, and reason should be adapted to this truth. But reason and faith don't belong on the same level; they are on two different levels. There should be a unification between them in the sense of Thomas Aquinas. In that sense, I'm a Thomist. If we compare belief or faith to the contemplation of ideas, it is the highest form of activity of the soul. It's a contemplation of something that is true, that is sure, that is being. Contemplation of being should be translated into reason in Aristotle's version. Working with logic, rational operations, in that sense we acquire a kind of holistic vision where metaphysics doesn't contradict the physics. But at the same time it's interesting that we need to analyse the realm where classical rationality is valid. The great mistake of modernity was the attempt to adapt logic to physics. The realm of physics is not logical, it's something different. If we have a theological aspect of faith explored by the means of metaphysics, if we have mathematical knowledge that corresponds to the realm of pure rationality, when we try to adapt that to natural phenomenon, we should transform this rationality from a logical one to a new kind of rationality, what I call a rhetorical or poetic type of rationality. So, when we apply strict logical rules to nature, we should make a shift from logic to rhetoric. The more correct knowledge won't be as precise in a logical sense, but it will be poetic. The best way to understand nature is to not apply the rules of reason, but the rules of poetry. We have three levels of knowledge: theological, rational (based on reason), and poetic (or rhetorical). Modernity's mistake is that it tried to explain nature with reason which belongs to a different level of reality. There is no strict symmetry between the two of them. Trying to transform matter, or nature, into a logical reality where, for example, A equals A, is violent. Nothing is equal to itself in nature; it's dialectical, it's Dionysian. A doesn't equal A in reality. For example, the theory of Mandelbrot or fractals present the final understanding of this situation. In nature we are not dealing with reason, we are dealing with something that has a completely different logic, the logic of nature, not the logic of reason. There are means to understand it and that is poetry. An exact knowledge of a forest in autumn would involve a poetic description of it. This is closer to the physical reality of the phenomenon than any kind of mathematical description. It is philosophical phenomenology that has recognised the difference between scientific knowledge and reason. The reason of a normal man is not a reduced version of reason, it's a different reason. It is much more rhetorical, metaphorical, dialectic and poetic. A normal man is more of a poet. He explains reality poetically, not scientifically. With this additional third level added to the concept of Thomas Aquinas we have all three levels of reality: the metaphysical, which should be studied by means of contemplation and the direct vision of ideas as eternal entities; the adaptation of the result of this reason to rationality and its laws; and finally, the adaptation of logic by means of rhetoric to reality. Theology, philosophy and poetry form a holistic version of knowledge.

N: Are you personally using this approach in your exploration of knowledge?

D: Yes, the most important field of my personal interest is theology, the study of religion and the comparative study of religion…

N: But you haven't spoken or written much about your personal faith…

D: For me the individual isn't so important. I'm an Orthodox Christian. I belong to a line of Old Believers that is part of the Moscow Patriarchate but conserves the Old Believers' rites…

N: I mean in terms of your writing, I haven't seen you delve into theological topics much. For example, in your discussion of Eurasianism or the Fourth Political Theory, I don't really remember much of the religious perspective coming through. And this is often a problem in International Relations, the religious and theological aspects are just completely ignored or abandoned or at best treated in a kind of scientific and quantitative fashion.

D: I think that is a mistake. To understand Russian or any other Orthodox identity we need to concentrate on Orthodox theology and on the differences, the historical, dogmatic, and ritualistic aspects between Eastern and Western Christianity. Without this theological basis we can't understand anything in International Relations. For me, the study of theological principles is essential. I don't insist on this in the Fourth Political Theory because I try to make it more of a general description. I insist on an existential approach, but when we come to a concrete version of the Fourth Political Theory, for example, in Iran or Russia or Europe, we need to appeal to their respective religious roots. This Fourth Political Theory of mine is considered in Iran to be one of the forms of idea of the humanist revolution. In Russia my ideas are considered to be of the radical Orthodox conservative tradition. So, it's a norm. I don't insist on theology because in other societies they have different religions. We need to respect them as well.

N: But, if faith is key to understanding problems in International Relations, yet you say that you can't mention it because this subject must be kept general and secular to accommodate everyone, isn't that a fundamental methodological problem right there?

D: Usually we consider that there is secularism that is tolerant regarding religious faith and there is religious faith that is intolerant in front of other religions. I see it in a different way. All existing religions now are under attack of overwhelming secularism, globalisation and liberalism, which destroy Christianity, Islam, Judaism, Buddhism, Hinduism, and the Chinese tradition, by pretending to impose a tolerant attitude. Tolerance is based on indifference. But indifference is incompatible with faith. Faith is always alive. So, my idea is to create a common front between all religions defending their special identities without any confusion or mixtures, but directed against Western liberal secularism in order to save each identity and their originality. Christian traditionalists understand that the profound dimension of their tradition is not only

closer to Islamic, Jewish, Buddhist traditionalists, than to secular, liberal, Western, tolerant preachers of equality, but also closer to each other than to the superficial representatives of their own faith. I don't think that we should make it that formal, or create some structure. We need to defend tradition and the transcendental dimension against secularisation while still having different traditions.

N: Nevertheless, surely a traditionalist Christian would be confused with the promotion of different religions (like Hinduism and Buddhism), which worship different gods, as it breaks the first commandment that thou shalt have no other God before the Lord thy God. Indeed, in their view by recognising and legitimising other faiths on the same level as Christianity you are condemning their followers to hell and acting like the devil by saying there are other realities and pathways to salvation on the same level as the one true path of Christ.

D: I don't affirm that they are on the same level, I think that there is a plurality of absolutes. That means that you can't reach an absolute by ignoring your own identity. Final reality and God are inside of our own culture. We can't get closer to unity by trying to recombine the elements of different religions or change our religion. We have only one path. If we are Christian, we should find the root of this tradition. We should go to its most hidden mystical core, not pretending to judge other faiths nor put them on the same level, nor confuse them. But at the same time, we need to let other religions do the same. If everyone gets to the roots of their own traditions, we will reach a better mutual understanding than when we deal with it from outside. Today, when dealing with the globalists and a Western hegemony that attacks all tradition we could conclude a formal agreement between ourselves without making any final decision about what is salvation, and what is the devil. For example, Satan has a different role for the Jews. There are three different figures because there are three different theological contexts in different religions. We shouldn't pretend to blame each other; we should blame modernity together. After that we should purify our religion from the modern elements inside of it. It is a pan-fundamentalist approach. I'm a pan-fundamentalist. I don't pretend that Islam, Hinduism or Judaism is true, for me as a Christian, only Christianity is true. But I understand when a Muslim says the same thing about himself. He says that Islam is true for him and his tradition. If we respect each other's right to follow our path or exchange our positions, including contradictory ones, when we are asked; not when we try to impose our will. But when a Muslim asks me what I think about religion, I can explain my position. When no one asks, but says 'let us keep our faiths to ourselves, let's promote them in their cultural and historical limit, where they are organic, and let's struggle together against Western hegemony and individualistic post-religious modernist and post-modernist aggression (geopolitically, economically, ideologically, technologically)' — that is good. But that doesn't make an equivalence among traditions.

N: But again, doesn't that go against Christ's message to his apostles in the Gospel of St Matthew where he said 'Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost'? Christ didn't put cultural or geographical limits on the spreading of His truth, so why do you? And following your logic, how exactly would you determine where the cultural, historical and geographical limits of a religion are anyway? For example, paganism is historically the older religion in Europe and Russia, so should Europe and Russia go to back to paganism in order to embrace their true roots? And indeed many regions changed their religious outlook over the centuries, so how do they choose their true cultural religious identity? For example, North Africa for many centuries was a haven of Christianity then it became mainly Muslim and remains so to this day. So, should it go back to its Christian roots, which are older, or remain Muslim? And I repeat my earlier point that by accepting the status quo and not spreading the faith, in a traditionalist understanding, you are denying people the possibility of true salvation in heaven and instead are condemning them to eternal damnation in hell.

D: We cannot condemn anyone; God condemns, first of all. Secondly, I think that it is our duty to spread the message of God. There are many forms. You could conquer countries and impose Christianity on them without explaining anything, without trying to understand their own tradition. The results would be perverted. It is the highest hypocrisy to spread the word of God by colonisation. If a priest comes to another tradition and tells the truth, he could be killed or accepted. But when you conquer people and transform them into slaves and legitimate that by sending some priests, I find that unchristian. Orthodoxy was much more consequent in that sense. We didn't try to impose too much compared to what Protestants or Catholics did. We are more or less innocent. We tried to say that our faith in Christ was the best one. Come to us and we'll explain how and why. Being a part of the Orthodox Church, I share the position of my Church. Being a philosopher, a theoretician of the Fourth Political Theory, the Multipolar world, the anti-globalist traditionalist front against Western hegemony, I cannot be limited by that. As a part of the Church I share everything that our Church affirms, but I think that we need to emit the position that is in our tradition against other religious people because there are too many differences and contradictions not only between Christians and Muslims, but between Catholic and Orthodox. My idea is to unite the external front against the globalist threat and not to enter into details. I think we need to spread the word. We need to testify to our faith and our beliefs, but we need to make it by accepting others, not by force or power, but by the force of our persuasion. And that's essential. The recognition of others is a basic idea in Christianity. So, faith can be accepted or rejected based on a free decision.

N: So, we are back to where we started this morning: free will. You mentioned earlier that you would like to recite a poem to us. Now seems like as good a time as

any, so please feel free to recite away. But first, what is the poem called?

D: Yes, okay. It is called ‘Terra Foliata’ and it goes like this:

The one who knows about Terra Foliata

May (is free to) abandon (forget about) all the books

The one who doesn’t know about Terra Foliata

Will never learn how to read.

This is a feathery snowy land (ground)

Covered with orange leaves

Fiery stillness of elusive mercury

A tentacle is pink-invisibly growing on Saturn.

Androgyne lies on meadow dandelions

A double helix moves like a snake in his hair

A book is sleeping next to him, *Cosmology* by Robert Fludd

Leda is freezing (turning into ice) inside the Swan

It’s an ancient, ancient legend, the legend of Terra Foliata.

N: What did that poem mean to you, Alex?

D: This poem was written by my friend and teacher in philosophy, traditionalism, poetry, and mystical tradition, Eugene Golovin. He was a poet and a specialist in spiritual alchemy. In alchemy, the term ‘Terra Foliata’ means ‘earth covered with leaves’. So autumn, when all the leaves are yellow and gold, is the symbol of the transformation of common metals into gold. It is the ending of an alchemical operation, it’s also a symbol of spiritual perfection. A man following a spiritual path should reach the end of his life. It’s a result of all his efforts because the transformation of metal into gold is the goal of spiritual development. Eugene Golovin is a spiritual pole for me. He is not only a man I met in my youth who has influenced my future life, but he is also a kind of symbol of a man who stands vertically among the ruins, among total devastation, and the abomination of the Soviet period. For me and him, Soviet society was a total destruction of the spiritual culture. It was the worst example of modernity. Golovin hated communism, socialism, materialism, progressivism, and modernity. He was the first man to discover the works of René Guénon and Julius Evola, Fulcanelli and all the spiritual traditionalists. I’m in his debt. I consider him to be the man who changed my life. This poem is not a testimony of his understanding of the depths of alchemy and spiritual science, but it’s a very beautiful piece of art. All the words in this short poem

are charged with deep meaning and symbolism. They are so beautiful that they produce an immediate effect on people who read it. It speaks for itself. It's a kind of alliance of infinite beauty and deep metaphysical meaning.

N: Indeed, well put. This union of metaphysics, alchemy and nature is rather curious. What is your relationship towards nature itself?

D: I think that nature is a projection of the subject. It's not something that exists by itself, it's a phenomenological object. Nature is a text where mysteries of the spiritual life are written. There are things not to adore but to interpret, to understand. It is a spiritual text. We don't need to understand how it works mechanically, but understand its spiritual message. For me, nature is a message that the Radical Subject (the inner self) is sending us; it's an invitation to discover our inner self. Plotinus affirmed that we need to understand the exterior world only by closing our eyes; it's the only way to see it. Nature is not something that lies outside of ourselves; it's a voice. First of all, we need to concentrate on its message, we shouldn't be greedy for nature, we shouldn't use it, we shouldn't subjugate or conquer it. It's not an enemy, an independent object, or reality which our mind reflects. It's something different. It is sacredness as well as poetry. Nature and poetry form one text, one surface of being. Nature isn't outside of us, it's inside as well. We need to understand nature in a poetic way. I agree with Gaston Bachelard, the French philosopher, who accentuated that the understanding of matter in modern physics is based on poetic imagination. Nature is an imagined and imagining thing. An imaginary thing is something that doesn't exist independently from us. But it's not a projection of our little ego, it's a projection of our greatest, deepest self. Nature is very particular. We shouldn't consider nature in terms of whether we love it or not. The problem is different. We don't need to care about nature, or save it, we need to understand it. If we understand nature, we understand ourselves.

N: And where does the theory of evolution fit into this worldview? And more generally, what do you think of evolution?

D: It is false. It's based on linear time and the material origins of nature. There is no such thing as evolution. There are many kinds of cycles inside nature: there are moments of flourishing and moments of decay. A year perfectly describes nature. If we think that more heat means evolution, it's stupid. Or if we consider winter to be morally bad… Spring is not an evolution. We can see some growth and some decay in nature. They are both important, they are part of the message, the beginning and the end, birth and death, the permanence of something, its transformation and changes. They are all a part of some sentence, some discourse. We need to understand it correctly. Evolution is the wrong reading of nature. It's a projection of the linear, progressivist mind. Everything changes, but nothing evolves because everything circulates around its own centre. The centre is the message of the phenomenon, and not the periphery. We shouldn't impose

our prejudices on nature. We need to decipher nature in a correct way. And evolution is the wrong way to do so.

N: And so you reject the evolutionary theory that humans evolved from apes?

D: Absolutely; it is a lie. I could accept the origin of man from apes as a myth. There are other myths too. People in Tibet think that man originated from a red ape. It's a myth. We should understand the symbolic meaning of apes for them. I don't think that Darwin had something like that in mind. He was a materialist and an idiot. There is nothing in common between a human and an animal.

N: Even DNA?

D: That's completely wrong. It's a modernist imposition of a totalitarian rationality based on the dogmatism of progress, development and evolution.

N: But if you could prove it objectively, medically…

D: I don't believe in DNA. There are people who believe in DNA. I reject it as a false heresy. I don't believe in modern science not because it's science, but because it's modern. I don't believe in modernity. Modernity and everything about it is wrong because it is based on materialistic, atheistic, secular premises that I reject from the beginning. Scientific methods prove nothing and everything can be explained in a different way. There is nothing objective about a human. A human is a subject. Socrates once said that a man is a soul. Everything that affects a human is spiritual, as well as nature and objects. Science should be spiritual too. Material objectivity proves nothing because it is subjective. Everything is subjective or deals with a soul in the human world. And we live in it. It will not last for a long time because robots and machines are here to replace us. We are going straight in that direction. Modern science's idea is to replace spiritual rationality with a robot's consciousness and mechanical rationality. Modern science is already AI.

N: Do you go to a doctor when you get ill?

D: No, I don't believe in doctors or pills. I believe in the force of prayer and the mystical effect of ointment. In traditional Russian Orthodox families, special ointment in churches serves to heal illnesses.

N: And you've been healed by this personally?

D: Yes. I don't care about my health and my physical state because there is no such thing. I rarely get sick. I care about my soul, thoughts, philosophy. The rest is hypothetical. I care about metaphysics. I don't believe in the existence of a body outside of the mind. There is no body or matter. They are imagined entities.

N: Would you recommend this as a general theory to humanity, to get rid of all the hospitals and modern medical treatments, cures, etc.?

D: I cannot recommend anything to humanity. The return to tradition is what I can recommend. We should follow what tradition says. If it says to go to clinics and behave like apes because it's your past, that is your tradition, not mine. Evolve, do what you

want. That's a hole in the law. Leave people who don't believe in apes, or DNA, or clinics, or Obama Care, alone. I can't recommend anything except to follow traditions.

N: And what would you say to the argument that many people prayed for cures and remedies to diseases, and so, for example, the invention of penicillin was just God answering their prayers? Could not something like this be considered a union of tradition with science, of the spiritual with the bodily? Indeed, God gave us the power to reason, as we discussed before, and with reason comes an understanding of the earth and its healing secrets. And we are not just a soul; we have a corporeal element as well…

D: No, we are just a soul and the body is a part of the soul. We need to understand the reason of the disease in the first place, not to cure it. I follow Paracelsus, who identified five reasons for disease: nature, spirits, God, planets, and providence. We should identify why it happens, what the meaning of it is, and not how to cure it. We consider illness as something that happens with our material objective body that has an independent reason from our soul. We are engaged in this vision, sense, meaning of illness. There is no other way to cure it but in a material way. We never ask what is the reason for an illness, and why it is so? We should run away and readjust. It's a mechanical attitude towards ourselves. It's a robotic lifestyle when we need to repair something immediately. There is value to being ill, to being alive or dead: everything has a meaning. We need to find the meaning of life, health, illness, death, birth, our being here. Everything including healthcare should be existential, metaphysical, human in the deepest sense of the word because to be human is to be a soul. Russia or America are not first, the soul is first, everything else is after. A Russian poet said, 'If the head leads you to hell, cut it off. If your eyes lead you to hell, take them out.'[36] So, to be blind is better if the soul's salvation is at stake. I suggest we follow that directly and consider not the value of healthcare, but the reason for the illness. If there is God, then everything has a meaning, a special goal and a lesson to give us, including the worst things that happen. They teach us something. If we get the lesson, it's the best result and not just trying to readjust, repair. If something is falling down, we need to understand why, and not just to keep it because it may be evil. The Soviet Empire collapsed. In order to save it at any price, we need to understand if it was something we really needed. Materialistically, we should repair and conserve everything. But in fact we should concentrate on the meaning of life and the object we are dealing with. I understand how terrible that sounds for the majority of modern people, but the majority is always wrong. If we take only these sequences of radical sayings, we'll arrive at a caricature of my thoughts. That may be possible, but it doesn't give the idea of what I really think.

N: If the body is irrelevant and it's only the soul that matters, then why, for example, do you wear clothes when it's cold outside? Surely, we can't ignore these basic, material concerns.

D: We have weak souls. The Tibetans don't notice cold weather. By concentration, by the power of the soul, they can dry wet blankets.

N: Why do you think God gave us sensation and feeling then?

D: In order to improve everything because our sensation should be transformed into a spiritual one. The body is material and agile in order to make something new. Monks concentrate on this transformation of the body. That's why I consider the body to be a part of the soul and not something independent. It is a body of immortality, glory or resurrection. There is something spiritual in the body. It's the most important thing, this point in the body is eternal and it's a link to the soul. So the body is not quite independent.

N: That is a very profound point. However, some ancient theologians also argued that the fact that, for example, we receive pleasure via the senses means that they were given us for a reason, so we could experience a foretaste of heavenly joy. And so perhaps it is not right to reject the senses entirely.

D: I don't reject feelings or senses; I reject the materialistic explanation of their independent nature. The concept of matter or object is modern. This concept contradicts the spiritual and metaphysical ones. And when we try to decipher pre-modern philosophical concepts with modern means we make a mistake. I'm not against healthcare, I'm against overestimating it. I'm against obsession with health, youth, body improvement and the fight for physical immortality, instead of spiritual immortality.

N: Ok, fair enough. But where do you draw the line between the focus on the body and the spirit? For example, imagine your daughter is hit by a car. You see that she clearly has serious injuries and that time is a key factor in whether she lives or dies. Do you take her to a hospital as soon as possible or do you instead hang around and contemplate the metaphysical reason for her accident?

D: I don't reject hospitals in general. I reject the obsession with hospitals. There are people who concentrate on helping others and they have great health. If something happens, it should have a reason, a meaning, a message. Maybe suffering is imposed on us as a radical lesson. We should concentrate on this. We should help people, we should save people, we should heal people, but it shouldn't replace or push away the most important thing. Now we are obsessed with the formal, materialistic, bodily aspects of reality. We consider helping a person hit by a car as if it was like repairing a mechanism. We never think of the reason it happened.

N: I think we do, especially if it is a near death experience. But in the aforementioned case it's a question of timing. Sometimes you don't have time to do these things immediately, but only a little while afterwards…

D: I don't agree. We never think. It's a good example. Everything has a reason. The problem is not to reject help, which is normal and logical. That is not the problem. There is a kind of hypocrisy… We conduct wars killing hundreds of thousands of

people, like in Iraq, and we don't notice it. And then a dog hurts its leg, and we get nervous and try to save it. This disproportionality indicates that something is wrong with our minds. If we tolerate the great suffering of the Iraqi people, and at the same time are excessively careful with a squirrel that fell down… I understand it and I'm willing to help animals, it's no problem. But we have a kind of shift of attention. The same with the spirit; it's the last thing we talk about. Repairing the physical aspect is the absolute imperative, while understanding the reason is optional.

N: But in the case above, if you don't act on the physical question immediately, you won't have a chance later on to consider the spiritual…

D: Maybe. It could be something like a test. Or maybe we might try to save something that shouldn't be saved. We are not gods; we should help God's will and we should be in synergy with it. But to do that we shouldn't be at the moment of the accident with a car, we should spend our life differently. We need to be in accordance with God's will, thinking about it all the time, then maybe we might avoid that situation or prevent something.

N: How do you know what's God's will for you is at that moment? Is it free will or is it determined? Do you have free will to go to hospital or not?

D: It's mechanical; you are obliged to go there…

N: No, because if you follow your line of reasoning, first of all you would stop and think about what's just happened, what the great spiritual reason for it all was. But in the meantime, your child would probably die while you do this. Maybe that would be God's will, or maybe he wanted you to take her to the hospital and save her. How would you know in that moment? So, in concrete situations with your reasoning a wrong choice can have terrible implications…

D: I don't see any problems here. The problem is that everybody has to act the same way in such situations. That doesn't mean anything. For me it's so insignificant. Obviously, we will try to save our close ones without thinking. But such a situation is not mechanical. It doesn't happen to everybody all the time without reason. My daughter is embedded in a concrete existential situation. If someone believes in Allah, what happens if a mullah tells them to kill their father? It's possible, but we don't consider it. Everything is embedded in the situation. There is no material universalism in this. Sometimes people get stupid names. And it happens rarely that a man with a stupid name deserves interest. It's not a law, but an observation. When someone comes to me and his name sounds stupid to me, usually I try to avoid him. If we avoid stupid situations, we're not responsible for them. But if we come across stupid situations, it's logical that we could be hit, bitten, cheated, tricked and we may be seduced to go into some situations. There are logical steps. If something happens to us, or to people close to us, everything has a kind of preparation. We could stop something bad from happening. When something terrible happens to us or our close ones, we are

responsible for that from the beginning, including when we are victims because there are no pure victims.

N: What about Job? He lost everything when God punished him in order to test his faith. Surely he was a pure victim?

D: Yes, absolutely. He lost everything: health, glory, friends, belief. He lost everything. That was God's lesson to make him glorious, prosperous and faithful. Job is the best example. I think that traditional society is based on such a kind of understanding of suffering. It could…

N: Although in the end, God does gives him almost everything back.

D: The problem is not to give something back, but to teach a lesson, then he would get much more than the material things which he lost. And he lost his loved ones who couldn't be replaced. So, it's not full compensation. He didn't get everything back. The lesson is not to get it back, but to teach the might and glory of God.

N: And what about Christ healing the lame and the blind?

D: It was symbolic first of all to make people believe in God. Only some were healed. He didn't reject anybody. But only believers were healed — that's important. It was a symbolic action in order to make people believe in God. Health can be a way to perdition, to sin, and to everlasting suffering, which can be a means of eternal joy. If we believe in paradise, in the soul and eternity, everything is changed. Modernity has created this dimension of life as something optional or even excluded as it was in communism. In liberal society to repair is the most important, while the afterlife is problematic.

N: What about when people say my body is my temple? Even here the body can have different meanings…

D: I agree. In the case of the Indian interpretation, if the body is the temple of Atman (the greater self) it is quite right. If it's the temple where God abides, it's right. In both cases it doesn't mean that my body belongs to me. The body is not property, or an object…

October 16

On our last day of interviews together we met bright and early near the financial centre of Moscow. The hustle and bustle of busy muscovites making their way to the office inspired our first conversation.

N: What does a normal day or week for you look like, Alex?

D: Ten to fifteen interviews per week by video or maybe twenty by telephone. For example, because I switched off yesterday, I had twelve missed calls from different news agencies. They are mostly about geopolitics, politics and international relations.

Two-thirds of these calls are from foreign news companies, journalists and agencies. I also meet with delegations and people from around the world and attend events with the Eurasia Movement once a week. Twice a week I meet with people from geopolitika.ru for planning, discussion, agenda. But most of the time I work on my books.

N: When do you have time to think and write?

D: For me, an interview is a kind of distraction, a rest or a break. I drink tea during interviews. But most of the time I dedicate to writing. It takes all of my time. I work on weekends and at night. There is no difference for me between free and occupied time. It's the same.

N: Doesn't that negatively affect your personal life, if you are constantly working?

D: It's intellectual work, so it's not a dissipation of power. Intellectual life is quite different. It's contemplating. It has a goal in itself. It's not an instrument for something. It is not a means to an end, it's a goal in itself. When you understand an idea, when you can formulate an idea, it's a result already. It's not about money, success or power. Because money, success, and power should be means (paths) to an intellectual state of mind. Philosophy is a humanistic vacation.

N: If Socrates were alive today, do you think he would be doing what you are doing, giving interviews, meeting with delegations, etc.?

D: I think so, yes. Maybe he would have been a part of the political life, as he was a soldier, and took part in the life of the *demos*. He was a full-scale citizen. Now to be a full-scale citizen means to have a position and to defend it. His relation to judgement was political as well, because he had a chance to escape and he chose not to. Because the law — including a law based on an unjust law — should be accepted in the name of abstract truth. It's a great decision. It's a pure political life. Plato composed dialogues based on politics in the name of Socrates, like his famous lecture to Alcibiades.

N: Was his death a purely political act or more of a philosophical one? I personally thought it was more of philosophical one.

D: Yes, there are many ways to understand it. In Plato, in Greek, in Xenophon we see the political activity of responsible citizens. Politics is not much different from a thought. It pretends to be so. When everything pretends to be fully technological, philosophy and politics become separated from all the rest too. In the classical age everything was united. I think we need to repeat that. That was the case as well during modernity, with Hegel and Nietzsche not participating directly…

N: Nietzsche was involved in the Franco-Prussian war as a medical orderly, wasn't he?

D: Yes.

N: But then you have a lot of philosophers who remain politically detached and just deal with aesthetics, the soul, beauty, etc. And then you have Christian philosophers

who talk mainly about faith, like St Augustine, even though I think he was political as well to some extent, wasn't he?

D: He was political, religious…

N: And Thomas Aquinas of course…

D: Yes, religious and political, but the political dimension was never his main concern.

N: Would you say that Pythagoras was political?

D: Absolutely. He was the founder of a political society

N: I though it was more of a religious cult?

D: A cult, a political party. It was metaphysical, religious, and political.

N: What about Lucretius or Democritus?

D: I hate them. I can't talk about them.

N: Ok, well let's turn to something which perhaps you are more comfortable talking about. What do you consider a church actually to be? Is it a building, a body of believers, a community, the embodiment of Christ? What do you think it is?

D: In the concept and understanding of the Orthodox Christian tradition, the Church is the collective body of Christ and is formed by all believers, clergy included. So there is a difference with the Catholic Church, which is considered to be the community of the clergy, that is, in the Catholic Church the clergymen form the Church and believers fit in some way around it. But according to the Russian Orthodox Christian tradition, the Church is not only the clergy, but believers as well. That is the concept of the holy people, which includes clergy, bishops, metropolitans, patriarchs. Together they form the Church. It is a living body of Christ because the Church is based on communion. And this body has a divine part that represents Christ and his life during all the history after his incarnation. Also there is a historic part of his body. So, that is the Church in its historical dimension, historical manifestation, that is the Christian destiny or ecclesiology. The earthly part of this body of the Church passes through history confronting challenges, experiencing ups and downs, different historical situations, sometimes paradoxical but still being the same at its divine core. The building of the church represents the stage, some momentary stage. It is a kind of manifestation of this body that is chosen from all other spaces. It is where the mystery is fulfilled, the mystery of the Eucharistic liturgy. There is a special chosen space (*temenos* in Greek) that is dedicated to the sacred. The church is built in this special space where, in the general sense, as the body of Christ it gathers together to meet in special circumstances. It's a kind of place to return to ourselves, where the church returns to its being during holidays, Sunday and liturgy. All this is a kind of semantic, ontological and historical line of Christ being in time and Christians as adopted sons and daughters of Christ, being in time. So the Church has a special dimension in the church building as well as in the field of the mission of Christianisation. So, the Christian world is a space of the

Church. And history is the time of the Church. History has a meaning only in front of the church because the Church is the subject of history. So everything that happens, happens finally to the Church. The Church in the subject. So that is the Christian understanding of what is going on. And so we have no other history except the history of the Church, including the periods of apostasy, secularisation, or modernity, these have their meaning as well. The absence of the Church or marginalisation of the Church, or oblivion, or devastation, or destruction of the churches as buildings as well as the clergy as the central anthropological expression of the Church also obtain their meaning precisely in relation to the Church, so that is not the Church. It is not only a victory; it is a fight. The Church is a subject that can suffer because there is a suffering Church, a triumphant Church and…

N: A split Church.

D: Yes.

N: And that's what I wanted to talk about next, Patriarch Bartholomew's monumental decision last week to acknowledge the independence of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church. Some are calling it perhaps the greatest schism since the 1054 split between the Eastern and Western Christians with terrible geopolitical implications for the Russian world and Moscow's relationship with Constantinople. What are your thoughts on this?

D: I think it is a very serious and important decision, but I wouldn't overestimate it. It's a far narrower event than, for example, the Great Schism between Orthodoxy and Catholicism. It's much narrower than splits for example in Western history between Protestantism and Catholicism. First of all, we should remember that in the Slavic world, from the beginning of the first Bulgarian kingdom, there were efforts to establish a fully independent Orthodox Christian patriarchate based on Slavs. Throughout history this patriarchate, the sixth patriarchate, was acknowledged by Constantinople, but before that, it had been a kind of challenge for Constantinople to found this patriarchate in Bulgaria. It was the same with the Serbian Church. And there was a long period when the Serbian Orthodox patriarchate wasn't recognised by Constantinople. So there were no links between them. The next period was the Florentine Union of 1439 which was rejected by the Russian Orthodox Church. That was the beginning of the alternative path of the Russian Church because in the eyes of the Russian bishops it was heresy for Constantinople to recognise the Pope as the head of the Church. Though, we shouldn't forget that up until the first half of the 15th century the whole of Eastern and Western Russia was considered to be part of the Metropolitanate of Constantinople. So, we declared autonomy in 1448. Long after the Serbian and Bulgarian declaration of autonomy.

N: Was your autonomy recognised by the patriarchate of Constantinople?

D: Not immediately…

N: So this is quite similar to what has happened now with the Ukrainian autonomy…

D: Yes, but after that (in the middle of the 15th century) Moscow, the eastern part of Russia, declared autonomy. And many spaces in Western Russia still stayed under the control of Constantinople. As the influence of Moscow grew, in Lithuania and Poland there were efforts to create, based on the agreement of Constantinople, a Lithuanian Metropolitanate independent from the Moscow Patriarchate. This was also true in Galicia. They were created from time to time for a certain period. So there was a long history of recognition of different parts of the Russian Church as dependent on Constantinople. And the growth of Moscow in Eastern Russia was the driving force behind the Moscow Patriarchate. Sometimes this Moscow Patriarchate was in agreement with Constantinople; sometimes it wasn't. So, we had a period of disagreement. It's not the first time. And I wouldn't exaggerate the depth of this decision. It happens from time to time. It is not the final schism; it is a kind of balance of poles and I think that this time it has maybe (as always) political connotations.

N: I remember a conversation I had in my last film *The Pillars of Heaven* with Patriarch Filaret of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church, when he said, firstly, that the survival of Russia depends on two things: nuclear weapons and the Church. Secondly, that the survival of the Russian Church in Ukraine enables Russian religious control over Ukraine and the promotion of Russian cultural influence. Do you agree with this?

D: I agree with that. Politics and the Church were always strictly in tandem. It could not be otherwise because Church teaching is total. It includes politics. It is not only politics, it is not about politics, but it is a general holistic vision of reality, including politics. So the relations of the Church with the state are essential because that it is the way of how to deal with the population because the Church is not institutional; it is the people, the Christian people, and the state is an institution based on the same subject.

N: But can one state use its church to undermine the stability, sovereignty and territorial integrity of other states? That's what his point was. Do you think Russia is doing that?

D: Yes, and that was always a game because the state and Church are two forms of the historical life of the same people. The state is the earthly organisation of order; the Church of heavenly order. Normally there should be a symphony, not submission; neither the state to the Church, nor vice versa. But the relations between the state and Church were very different throughout history. It was always a changing balance. The ideal form of it is expressed in the concept of symphonia, when the Church is occupied with the spiritual well-being of the people, and the state with the political and social well-being. So there are two ontological directions and in a normative vision of the Orthodox Christian tradition, they should be on different levels; they should not intermingle in the way of contradiction, because they should be put on the same level. But it is a norm, it is a goal. That was not always the case. For example, during the time of Patriarch Nikon there was an attempt to make the state submit to the Church, under a

kind of Papism. Peter the Great was the answer. And he made a very effective attempt to make the Church submit to the state. It was almost Protestant. So, Peter the Great considered himself to be a kind of head of the Church and the Church became or almost became a ministry of the state, a state department that was used for political purposes. It was not always the case. So there is a changing balance. I think that now the Russian Orthodox Church is not a part of the state, but relations with the state are close. Certainly today the Russian Orthodox Church could not say that it controls the state, but neither is it controlled by the state. There is more or less a kind of synergy, but yes, connections are very, very tight and very close. But the problem is with the geopolitical status of Ukraine. Ukraine is a part of the Russian world. The Russian world is a kind of Kievan Rus…

N: Still, who decides whether or not it is a part of the Russian world? What if the Ukrainian people themselves, at a certain moment in their history, like now, say actually we are not part of the Russian world; we are part of Europe?

D: The first point is that identity is perspectivism. And the second point is that identity changes. So, 'the Russian world' is a historical concept. But if we consider history not as something that exists only in time, but as something like a structure or identity that reveals itself through time, then history has ten different meanings. So, it is not only the past but something that rests and remains because it belongs to a different dimension of reality.

N: But that doesn't really answer my question. It seems to me that it depends to a large extent on what period you choose to start from. For example, if you start in the 6th century, when Russia (and even the Russian world) did not exist, then you could say that those geographical lands (modern Ukraine and Russia) have a very different historical destiny and manifestation throughout time and that this Russian world identity is just an aberration. But you have deliberately picked the period when Russia (and the Russian world) came into formation and then used that as the concrete period on which to base the subject of history. So, it's all very relative, and indeed rather a slippery slope to base definitions of historical subjects on.

D: Yes, but I think that we should define a time period. If we are speaking about a thousand years, it is the Eastern Slavs that form the core of the Russian world. So, beginning from the state of Rurik we were united politically, ethnically, culturally and religiously. Since then up to now there were different modifications, splits, reunifications, revivals between the two parts. So, there was a split of Western Russia that included Ukraine and Belarus (in different parts) and Eastern Russia created around Vladimir and Moscow. And during this period (including the northern pole of Novgorod, which was the third pole with a particular destiny as well) there was a balance, a change, a shift of power that was reflected in politics, culture, and religious relations in the canonical territory of the Constantinople or Moscow Patriarchate. And

that was a change. The Russian world means some ontological unity of Eastern Slavs who were part of Kievan Rus, which was Christianised by Prince Vladimir the Great. Before that there was not just the Eastern Slavs but also the Finno-Ugric tribes. They were then put together and some unity was created for some centuries, the Russian world. After that there were different splits inside this Russian world.

N: Some might argue that the fact that this group of tribes quite often couldn't stay united proves that it wasn't an organic structure worthy of being classified as the subject of history. What's more, surely multipolarity would favour a collection of separate little groups to make up the Russian world as this is more balanced and just. And do the subjects within the greater Russian world have to agree with the Russian definition of the Russian world? For example, perhaps Ukraine or Belarus have a different understanding of what the Russian world means or even disagree that it should be called the Russian world, claiming, for example, that perhaps it should be called the Kievan world instead as that part of the civilisation is older than the Russian part?

D: The Russian world is not the Eastern Russian world. When we say the Russian world we consider that as Moscow's idea and we consider Russia as Greater Russia and we forget that there are White Russians and Little Russians who were the historical parts of Russia. Eastern Russia was Greater Russia. Greater Russia wasn't called so because Eastern Russia was great, but in a similar way as there was Greater Greece; that is, Eastern Russia was a colony of the core Russia. And core Russia was Ukraine. Ukraine is Russian in the most essential sense.

N: And what if the Ukrainians don't agree with that?

D: That is the game of recent historical issues. They are Russia. For example, there is Lesser Poland and Greater Poland. That doesn't mean that Greater Poland is better than Lesser Poland. Lesser Poland is the core, Greater Poland is the periphery. It is the same in our sense. Moscow is Russia represented historically as a peripheral eastern part, a Finno-Ugric territory colonised by some Slavs. Russia is not Moscow; Russia is more. But Ukraine is Russia. White Russia was the traditional name of the north-western part of Russia; Polotsk and the core of the Lithuanian state were precisely based on the same Polotsk duchy. And the eastern part of Russia was another part. So we are not the whole of Greater Russia. The Muscovite, Vladimir Russian Federation is only a part of the Russian world and…

N: But, Poland, for example, also has a very rich European part of its history, as do the western parts of Ukraine. I repeat again, you talk about perspectivism and multipolarity, which implies respecting other people's interpretations of their own history, culture, anthropology, etc. But, you don't seem to be applying this approach to their case. If these subjects within this supposedly Russian world don't accept the same ontology and history as you are propounding, then according to the logic of perspectivism and multipolarity you have to respect this.

D: Absolutely, but I am trying to understand what the Russian world is. It is not a nationalist's or imperialist's creation of Eastern Greater Russia. It is the historical and organic unity and identity of the united Eastern Slavs. There were Slavic tribes and during some historical periods in the middle of the first millennium after Christ they had a split in their destinies and they created different peoples and destinies: Bulgarians, Serbs, Czechs, Poles. So, they were Eastern Slavs who created their own identity based on the fact that they were Eastern Slavs, not Southern or Western. But before this split they had a kind of linguistic unity.

N: And yet these people (Bulgarians, Serbs, Czechs, Poles) now classify themselves as Central or Eastern Europeans. So, identity is very much a play with words. That language you are using (Eastern Slavs) has completely changed and they now declare their identity with reference to Europe. So, they look at their history in a different way…

D: Yes, but I'll continue. There was a split between Slavic people, but before that they were more or less united. Our language is very similar to Czech, Serbian, Bulgarian. They were the same people or tribes of the same people linguistically, historically, and geographically. Their motherland was Western Ukraine. [It was the motherland] of all Slavs, not only Eastern but Western too — all of them. Then there was a historical split and the creation of different destinies of people from the tribes. One of the peoples that was created from the eastern tribes, including some Finno-Ugric or Slavic tribes, was the Russian people. That was a people, not a tribe. It was created artificially by the state and by faith. To be Russian is to be a historical part of this Kievan state and this Orthodox tradition. That was one space politically, religiously, and Eastern Slavic ethnically and linguistically. The core of that is precisely what the Russian world is. After that there was another history but still inside of Russia because there was a different form of history, for example, in Bosnia, in Croatia, in Serbia, in Bulgaria, in the Ottoman Empire…

N: This is the point, why are you excluding this very rich and varied history that they all have? And instead just choosing to focus on their Eastern Slavic roots and using that to construct their whole ontology?

D: No, I don't exclude anything. But, now I'm explaining that the concept of the Russian world is not an Eastern Greater Russian imperialist, nationalist, artificial construction. It is a recognition of the ontological basis of only the united Eastern Slavs in Rus as a state that lasted for three to four centuries and was decisive in the formation of the post-tribal Eastern Slavic identity with the same state, the same religion — Orthodoxy — with more or less the same language, and the same historical being. It was the formation of Russia, of the Russian people, not yet Eastern Russia, not yet Little Russia, or White Russia but united up to the same point, as in Germany or the Celtic world. It was a kind of traditional Russian people and Russian world. After that, within

this world, according to its religion, history, and language there was a formation of the three major branches of the Russian world. There was White Russia whose history was embedded in Lithuania. The Lithuanian kingdom was created based on the Polotsk duchy. This was the core of White Russia and it had a special history and identity mixed with the Lithuanian spiritual tradition and that also affected Lithuanian history. And there was Little Russia, or what is now called Ukraine, which was composed from different spaces and some parts of these spaces didn't belong to Little Russia; for example, what we call Novorossiya (New Russia). This is not a part of Ukraine or White Russia. It was liberated from the Turks by the Greater Russians. So, it is a very recent and very late historic acquisition or re-acquisition of part of the territories by Eastern Russians. They formed their own special and different identity. So the creation of Ukraine is recent. It was based on an anti-Polish Orthodox Christian Western Russian population, primarily on the Cossacks and not the Szlachta or peasants. So, a special identity was created in the Hetmanate. And I agree that they have the right to trace their history from Kiev and Rus to their western Galicia and Volyn duchies to the Hetmanate. So Eastern Russia was only a part of the Russian world, and Little Russia decided to join Greater Russia by a deliberate and free decision of the Hetman. This was revised almost immediately after Bohdan Khmelnytsky. And there were other options to join Poland or the Ottoman Empire because they began to feel different from everybody, from Poland, from the Ottoman Empire and from Greater Russia. So they had their own identity and little by little the balance tipped to the side of Eastern Russia, Greater Russia that liberated and began to control Western Russia. And the last acquisition of a part of Western Russia was Galicia and Volyn which wasn't at that time controlled by Austria. So there was a continuing process of reimposing the power of Eastern Russia over Western Russian territories and by some that was accepted as a gift or a kind of liberation, but by others it was not because other identities were formed during the split and not easily understandable identities, with many layers. So I agree completely that Ukrainians and Belarusians have their own identity. They oppose the Russian world…

N: Not only that, they reject it.

D: Because they were biased by the Western powers in order to…

N: Is it wrong to be biased and influenced by other powers? I thought in multipolarity every pole has the right to influence and be influenced by whomever they want. Are you saying that Russia doesn't influence or bias other people?

D: I would like to stress that they were biased in their understanding of our common history. So what unites was undermined and what separates was exaggerated.

N: But presumably they instead emphasised what united them historically with Europe, for example, with Poland. So, there are flows and balances to these questions. Their history, as we both said, is quite split. You can't emphasise one side without separating from the other.

D: But what is interesting, if we speak about the Russian world, is that those who are against Eastern Russia say that the Russian world is an artificial nationalist creation, but it is not because the other part of the Ukrainians or the Belorussians choose freely to join this unity, not joining Eastern Russia but affirming the particular unity inside of the Russian world. So, they are not being controlled or manipulated or biased, they wanted to be a part of this unity. That is the split in Ukraine.

N: To come back to my original question, in your view, was the Russian Orthodox Church in Ukraine using its influence to destabilise Ukraine as a state?

D: Yes, because I think that the modern Ukrainian state is a failed state not because it is Ukrainian, but because it is one state with two peoples. It is like Belgium. In Belgium there are two peoples (the Walloons and Flemish). If, for example, the Walloons said that there were no Flemish or Protestants in Belgium, there are only Catholic French-speaking Walloons, how would the Flemish react? Or the opposite, if the Flemish said that there were no French-speaking Catholic Walloons in Belgium, but only Flemish Protestant German and Dutch speaking people, how would the Walloons react? The same thing is occurring now inside of the Russian world in Ukraine. Western Russia, that is, the western and southern part of Ukraine, declared themselves to be completely different people from the Russian world. The other part, Eastern Ukraine or Eastern Western Russia, (mostly Novorossiya as well, which wasn't a part of this organic space, but it depends because sometimes this territory was a part of one political system and at another moment the other political system) voting for Yanukovych, supporting candidates from the east of Ukraine, stressed not their loyalty to Russia, but their belonging to a separate pole and separate state with another identity. And Ukraine as a kind of Belgium should be a state based on the recognition of both identities. So, there are Walloons and Flemish, there are differences, there are cultural issues. But the Orthodox Church united both parts. They were Eastern Slavs, they were Ukrainians because Ukrainian is not an ethnic group, it is a kind of special language developed mostly in Western Ukraine. In Eastern Ukraine or in Kiev they use more Russian language or Greater Russian (Muscovite) dialect, because the Ukrainian language is also Russian, but with just another dialect. So that was the Ukrainian state. If it were based on the recognition of both parts, it could exist forever as a state with Crimea and with full independence from the Russian Federation. And recognising these two identities could create conditions for the peaceful continuity of this unity, as well as for the religious identity.

N: To many that might sound like a fairly reasonable solution to Ukraine's current woes. But then, how do you get to there from where we are now? There are clearly issues of trust on both sides. For example, besides the Russian Orthodox Church interference we have discussed, the Ukrainians also claim that in the Donetsk region

itself, from the platoon level to the army corps commander, you have serving Russian officers actually directing operations. So how would your idea be implemented…

D: I didn't finish my explanation because this is historical, and it's pretty important. I am speaking about how Ukraine could exist and I'm absolutely sure that by recognising itself as a kind of Belgium, with regard to its people and the different cultural groups, they could find a solution of how to conserve their unity, how to deal with Russia, how to deal with Europe, how to be the bridge between them because the contradictions now between Russia and Europe are not so great. So, everything is mostly artificial. If they could find their own unity, they could control the unity of Ukraine, the unity of the Church, and the bipolarity of the Ukrainian identity. But in order to cure that, they should recognise the problem, that there are two identities that need to be reconciled. But the western part is more aggressive. They say there is no such thing as the east, there is only one Ukraine — west Ukraine. This is pro-European, anti-Russian, radical nationalist and so on. And they say that everybody should be the same, as they are in Western Ukraine. But the reaction of Eastern Ukraine was to say no, we are weaker than you, we could not afford such an aggressive political position, and so we are relying on Russia. So, during the special situation of Euromaidan, and not before, they invited us (Russia) in. Before this they tried to solve the problem not with federalism, but in some peaceful way by saying, please recognise us as different inside of Ukraine. We are Ukrainians, but different. For example, we are Flemish, but we belong to Belgium, recognise us as such and everything will be alright. But this didn't happen, and after the Euromaidan with this split in Ukraine, this solution was seen as impossible. And this split is not finished because Putin hesitated to do what he should have done when Yanukovych was there; that is, invade all of Eastern Ukraine, not just a part, with Russian troops and grant them the choice to decide their own destiny either to create a two-people state with the western part based on the balance of power or split from Ukraine and create a second Ukrainian state like the Flemish, for example, or to join Russia. So, we wanted to give them a free choice, and not take Crimea or Donbass from them. But now there is an undefined status and Ukraine is like a wound that is bleeding and bleeding. So, Putin hesitated. He half-killed a man. You either kill a man or you don't touch him. There is no half-kill. It is geopolitically immoral.

N: What gives Russia the right to even half-kill a country? Don't countries get to decide their own fate, without external Russian supervision…

D: In the British colonial experience, you are so covered in blood, you cannot give us moral lessons…

N: I'm not trying to. But you seem to be suggesting that Russia can, even with its own history of ferocious leaders like Ivan the Terrible, Stalin…

D: We are not moral teachers, I never pretended to give any moral lesson to anybody. But I understand when someone uses force. I don't agree with that in every case, but in

another I might agree. There cannot be a general rule to use or not use force because it is a problem that has no solution, because it depends on what you think a just war is. And we could not accept a concept that would satisfy everybody. There is no such kind of just war or unjust war. Your history is what it is. It's…

N: It's both good and bad.

D: It's ours. It doesn't matter because there is no progress. We are the same. We should geopolitically invade Eastern Ukraine and give the right to the Eastern Ukrainian people. For example, imagine we are very powerful, strong Dutch people and our friends, the Flemish people, are under genocidal repression from the Walloons.

N: If it is as bad as you say, why don't you just call for a UN peace-keeping mission to go in and try to solve things…

D: The UN is not the judge…

N: That is rather strange as your Foreign Minister, Sergei Lavrov, always seems to refer to the UN charter and the UN Security Council as the bedrock of international relations. So, according to you the UN can't judge, but Russia can. Why is that?

D: We cannot judge.

N: But you are judging. You say you have the right to go in and half-kill or kill their nation, and then under your supervision let them decide their own fate. But one suspects that even after this period of decision making you will just say, 'Well, actually we're staying just to make sure you implement it' or 'no, you didn't make the right decision, so choose again until it pleases us or we will decide for you'. This is the risk…

D: Yes, but the West has supported the pro-Western part of Ukraine with no consideration for the eastern part, thinking that every claim from these second people in Ukraine, who are voting for Yanukovich by their own will, is just Russian propaganda. This crisis was ignited by the West and Russia responded with the answer that it would prefer a peaceful solution. But after Maidan there were no more peaceful solutions. Russia could either defend the weaker but very culturally, religiously, and geopolitically close part of Eastern Ukraine or Novorossiya, or give up all of Ukraine entirely. And Putin reacted half-heartedly. He did not give up Ukraine, but he also did not fulfil the historical, geopolitical duty to liberate the half of Ukraine, and this created the context we are now in with the split of the churches. That is the impasse. So after doing what we did we couldn't defend directly the Ukrainian Orthodox Church of the Moscow Patriarchate. It is an illusion. And I wonder why it took so much time to make such a decision to appeal to Constantinople or to recognise only the Orthodox Church of Ukraine. So after this liberation or crime, you can judge for yourself, but after committing these half measures a split of the churches was inevitable. We would have half and there would be our Moscow Patriarchate completely defended by the political independence of Eastern Ukraine without putting into question the fate of the western part. It could be a loss, everything could be different, but now we are hostages in

Eastern Ukraine because we didn't liberate it yet. Everybody is still hostage. We have liberated a small part of the hostages, and we have radicalised our relations with the terrorists of Kiev. That was the worst decision that Putin made. So he should be blamed for everything that is going on, not Patriarch Kirill, or Constantinople, or the West, or Kiev. What we are going through now is defined by the half measures of 2014. And this is not the end, because we will be obliged to fix it because if we don't liberate the eastern part of Ukraine, we are doomed to more and more negative consequences.

N: This brings to mind a lecture I attended a while ago with a Ukrainian colonel who made the following point, 'The Russians believe that what's mine is mine, and what's yours is negotiable. So, if the Ukrainian army does not win this war, Russia will never allow us to do such a thing again'. What do you think about this statement?

D: That is the behaviour of a strong subject. If you're strong you behave like that; if you are weak you behave differently.

N: Do you think that is fair? If you believe in multipolarity, how can you say that's fair because it is implicitly saying that actually some states are more equal than others…

D: Yes, absolutely, because I think that multipolarity means equality between peoples, not between bigger and smaller states. We should create a class of people in multipolarity; it shouldn't be based on countries, rather it should be based on civilisations. So, the Islamic world could be equal to the United States, and not the Islamic State or Iran as they are not sovereign in front of the United States. But the Islamic world as a whole — with all its economic and political means — could have enough weight to be a pole. Likewise, France is not a pole, as it is not enough, but Europe can be a pole.

N: But who ultimately decides who the poles are?

D: History has created the civilisational conditions for the post-unipolar world to become multipolar. For example, China is a pole now. Who decides that? I don't know, but it is more or less clear. Russia with Putin only tries to be a pole, it is not yet granted. China is a granted pole. China is above all of us. The United States is certainly a pole, a unique pole. Now the Chinese pole is appearing. Maybe they sacrificed many good things and many people to achieve it. If we were strong enough, we would suggest that they treat the Tibetans and Xinjiang Muslims better. But we should keep silent now because nobody asked us and we are not in a position to tell them to treat these people better. And, Europe is not a pole.

N: Why?

D: Because they hesitate; they are a part of the United States. But Europe can be a pole. And economically, culturally Europe is a civilisation that could be pulled by…

N: Some would say that Europe is already part of a pole, the Euro-Atlantic pole.

D: If that is the case, then there is no Europe; there is only greater America. But China manifests its will and its capacity to be a pole. Russia tries to be a pole; we are struggling to be a pole. Sometimes it is a success, sometimes it's not. But we are struggling. For example, taking half of Ukraine would be a defining moment in that process. So, we would then become a pole and nobody would say anything. If we avoid a nuclear confrontation, this will be our absolute victory. And after that we would be recognised on the same level as China.

N: It's a dangerous game to play though, if Russia fails to make it as a pole. And what about the victims of history, those states who don't qualify to be a pole or those who simply don't want to be part of this type of global structure? Are they just forcefully absorbed into a pole or kicked around in the grey zone outside? And you seem now to be unilaterally rewriting one of the key results of the Second World War, which is the formation of the UN framework, which recognises the sovereign state as the main subject of international relations…

D: The UN didn't decide anything; that is what hypocrisy is. I think that now everybody should be a part of some pole, or they will be invited by another pole. China will not ask whether they want to be under the influence of one pole. They will come and they will install their order and they have the capacity and the will to do so, in a very peaceful, economic way in the beginning; after that we will see. But that is hegemony, and China's hegemony is growing. If a state is strong enough, they could resist, if not, then that's all. If you are small and you want to defend your identity, try to find a civilisation you are close to. For Ukraine we are the closest civilisation…

N: That is debatable.

D: Yes, or Europe. But now Western Ukrainians are trying to be part of the Euro-Atlantic pole. Let them try to do that. When Europe is either split or becomes an independent entity, I think that will hardly affect Ukraine because now Europe is the other question. But I think that they (Ukraine) don't belong to this Euro-Atlantic consolidation at all, because Eastern Europe, not Europe, is very particular. I have dedicated two volumes in my *Noomakhia* series to the identity of Eastern Europe, and I have come to the conclusion that it is completely different not only from us, but also from Western Europe. It is a Europe unto itself, and not part of Eurasia or Western Europe. Eastern Europe is a great space with a special identity. But I think that the problem of balance or justice in multipolarity is formulated in the following way. Justice should be based on power. But power cannot be the power of the state because the state could not exist today, except some special state which is already a pole. So the pole is the configuration point for integration. Europe can be a pole if there is the will to be so. Europe has the resources to be a pole against the United States, against Russia, against China, against the Muslim world. And it's necessary to be against someone because that defines your boundaries, your limits and your civilisational meaning. But,

while being against another on the outside, you should have unity within. So, poles should be based on the reconciliation of very different opinions of the European people, for example, and based on the same security system, the same historical identity of the French, Celts and Germans. And they are so different and antagonistic. Their differences are much greater than, for example, Eastern Ukraine, Western Ukraine, including Eastern Russia. So, all of this should be put in multipolarity. But in saying all that, I am not advocating Russia's behaviour before the conflict because that was their fault and the responsibility was in a large part on us because we didn't do anything in order to keep Ukraine united, in order to support it before this critical moment, except only with oil and gas, and personal deals between oligarchs. That was our disgusting Moscow Russian Federation policy towards Ukraine; it was corrupt and idiotic. So we share responsibility for what happened because we didn't do anything in reality in order to save Ukraine, to defend the rights of the second people and to prevent such issues. But the other form of disgusting corrupt politics was the politics of the West because with no knowledge of the real history or the real identity of Ukraine, the West behaved in a very awful way supporting only part of the population (Western Ukraine) and using the country as a weapon against evil Russia. It was completely wrong. So we share responsibility. And I think that the problem is the incompetence of the ruling elites on both sides, on all three sides — of the West, the Kremlin, and Ukraine — who with no knowledge, operated with myths and nationalistic, artificially constructed fake identities made for PR purposes. This is not much different from what we have here. This is a kind of general crisis of the ruling elite that plays with identity and history. And I think that what is happening today is a split in the Church that has no deep theological meaning. It has no different dimension for the destiny of Orthodox Christianity as it is described on both sides. But I think that this is a very tragic consequence of the total incompetence of the ruling political elite, that the Church is used as their instrument. So, we can't blame the Church leaders because they are hostages of these geopolitically and historically incompetent political elites. And I don't think that it is really important in a theological or eschatological sense. For me the Constantinople Patriarchate didn't commit a crime or fall into heresy now. I don't think that it is considered as something really serious from a dogmatic point of view. Geopolitically it is clear that this time they played on the West's side. I cannot applaud that — I deplore the situation — but I cannot blame anybody here, except those who have created an enchained Ukraine.

N: Ok, well, let's move onto another topic. Let's talk about the Anglo-Russian relationship and where it currently stands, particularly with regard to this latest Skripal incident. The British authorities now believe that they have identified two, possibly three, suspects in this case. They believe that these suspects are serving members of the GRU (Russian Military Intelligence) and so they conclude that this is evidence of the

direct involvement of the Russian state. What are your comments on these latest developments?

D: I have lost the logic of the story. At first I thought it was a clearly prepared special operation by the West designed to make relations between Great Britain and Russia worse during the Brexit period, and more generally to destroy the growing influence of Russia in the West. It seemed to be something like that because I couldn't imagine Putin giving such an order to annihilate Skripal before the Football World Cup in Russia. It is very strange. But after the revelations of these two strange persons and their declarations on Russian TV, I didn't understand anything…

N: It was bizarre, wasn't it?

D: It was really bizarre because they didn't prove anything. And there was clearly something wrong with them, it was obvious that they were hiding something. They were suspicious and unclear. Then at first, I had the idea that maybe there was something wrong with the Russians, because the explanation was incredibly stupid on our part. Initially there was the propaganda, and blaming the West, but now I have lost the line of argument. In order to blame someone, you have to have some logic. If this was a provocation of the West, we should make clear arguments, not hysterical explanations of who these persons are, about why they were there or we shouldn't not show them at all, saying that we could find them, or showing them and letting them explain the situation. This was only half. Now I don't have any judgment. I have heard all sorts of stories with incredibly stupid conspiracy theories, for example, that they were a special group of criminals working not on the side of the West or Russia, but involving Skripal in some kind of illegal activity, or that his death had some connection with some highly placed Russian figure, and so on. So this was a kind of gathering of one idiotic story after another with no logical connections. So I got lost. Before, I had some clear vision of the geopolitical framework of it, that it serves the forces in the world that try to split the growing relations between Russia and the West, and maybe that is so. But the Russian answer was so stupid, so unconvincing and so confused that now I have no such clear idea about it. I cannot say whether they are guilty or not. But the story of the UK obtains more credibility, including in my eyes. And the Russian story loses credibility in my eyes. I'm a priori in favour of Russia, and even I couldn't criticise it. Neither could I be biased by Western propaganda. I am considered to be one of the Russian propagandists, but in this case I cannot support the Russian propaganda because of the lack of rational arguments. So, I'm sorry, but I have no idea about it. I can recognise my incapacity to dress or put together the facts, including those dealing with some kind of fake news. I understand the fake story of the West, which is more or less coherent. But I cannot understand our fake story, particularly why we don't respond with some coherent sequence of events, whether or not they're all lies. I'm not speaking about the truth in such a situation, but it is strange why our story is so weak.

N: You previously told me that you thought the Litvinenko poisoning by Russia was possible. With your stated doubts above about the Skripal case, are you now moving to the belief that a similar thing was possible here as well?

D: I still don't think that it was possible. But, the situation is so strange that I demand to know what is going on inside of Putins head now, because to give the order to make this interview with Simonyan, they should have some idea of why. But it was so embarrassing for everybody; Simonyan and these strange guys looked so idiotic. They didn't prove anything. They didn't convince anybody. And they confused those of us who are partisans of Putin's truth. So, it's a little embarrassing.

N: Where do we go from here? Because now we seem to have a coordinated naming and shaming policy by the West against the GRU. We have the revelation by the Dutch of 300 GRU agents who are accused of hacking into the OPCW (The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons). We have the American investigations into the GRU members who are accused of hacking the American elections, and now we also have the Skripal case. So the UK, the US, and the Dutch are together conducting this naming and shaming policy, in their eyes, for deterrence purposes in order to weaken Russian intelligence capabilities in the shadow wars we are now engaged in.

D: So there are different points here. For example, there is a kind of network warfare. The Americans recognised that for many years they led this network of war operations against us.

N: Sorry, what do you mean by network warfare?

D: That is a US strategy to gain control of the informational sphere over their potential enemy using all kinds of propaganda, cyber weapons, etc. That is network warfare. It has been recognised officially by the United States Army since the beginning of the 1990s. So now it has been an established part of strategic studies in the field for thrity years in the US. I personally tried to attract attention to this field, not for research, but as an implemented weapon directed against us, from the beginning of 2000 in Russian military and special services circles and I was met full indifference. But little by little things changed. My idea was that we needed to create a counter attack (and not only a defence) against those who officially lead this network war against us using the same means as they use, and respond to them in a symmetric way. This was a basic document I signed. So, for example, we should be penetrating their social networks, supporting dissidents (just as the Americans help Navalny or others) and creating a tendency in favour of our national interests in all countries which we consider to be hostile to us. So, in the same symmetric fashion trying to find weak points in Western societies and support them by all means necessary, including hacking, *because we are being hacked*. Therefore, if there are GRU agents who are doing this, then it is normal. Stop attacking us and we will not attack you. It is a realistic attitude to geopolitics. I call it Eurasian network warfare. So finally, if, without informing me, they accepted this

strategy and there are agents of the GRU in the United States, the UK, and the West doing exactly the same thing the West does against us, I don't believe it because it is too good to be true and because there is a kind of laziness of Russian *silovikis*, hardliners, Army, and secret services in the sphere of high-end information technology. But if this is true, then I'm glad. I am glad that they are trying to hack the American system in order to destabilise it and to make it weaker because they attack us. Stop attacking us and we'll stop attacking you. This is a realistic attitude. If you strike me, I will hit back. If you stop beating me, we'll try to find some way forward. But we should have some assurance that you will not hit us next time. So, maybe we should hit once more in order to finish it… it is a fight. But killing someone who has no influence on political and social relations, and whose death would undermine our position and attractiveness and rather predictably provoke some negative reactions towards us and help our enemies gain evidence against us, whilst at the same time using the GRU network to effectively and brilliantly hack the West, I think, is simply contradictory. So, maybe finally if it will be a provocation and if there are some links, I'm happy that it is the truth that there is a network of GRU agents all over the world trying to fight against our strategic adversaries who are leading the same network warfare against us and which is a part of the American strategy not to allow the appearance of an independent geopolitical entity in Eurasia. This is one of the most important strategic points of American international politics from the 90s onwards, including during Trump's leadership. It is a way to not let the multipolar world appear. That is why there is a confrontation with China and Russia. So, we have no choice but to kill Skripal, including all that. It seems to be a realistic idea. Or it is a provocation aimed at discrediting, revealing and denouncing this real or pretend network of GRU hackers.

N: This approach hearkens back to the biblical phrase 'An eye for an eye'. But then, if we both take an eye, we both go blind or half blind at least. Or it calls to mind Confucius's famous remark 'Before you embark on a journey of revenge, dig two graves'. It seems to me that both sides (the West and Russia) see this conflict as a war of deterrence and so with this approach we are just doomed to an endless and undoubtedly ever more escalatory cycle of responses to each other's perceived attacks. So, at the end of the day what's the point of engaging with each other like this? What do we gain by it? Would it not be better to leave vengeance to the Lord?

D: Gorbachev thought in a similar fashion. And he stopped the fight and still lost both eyes. He lives, but where is our great Soviet Union? That was the real Russia, not the mutilated part of Russia with bloody borders that we now have. So, we have lost both eyes by not responding and our enemy has conserved both of his. we cannot stop it in a unilateral way.

N: Well, I certainly agree that this can't be done unilaterally. It is clear that both sides need to do it at the same time. I don't agree that you lost both eyes while the West kept

both. For example, China rose while the West declined, and Russia was still left standing and in a position to later reemergence. Indeed, in some ways everyone gained by the result, in that the confrontation didn't lead to a nuclear apocalypse.

D: Gorbachev lost the country. The Soviet Union was Russia. The Russian Federation is a small part of Russia because the Soviet Union was a continuation of the Russian Empire and Russia as such. And this Russia was totally lost by Gorbachev and Yeltsin precisely because they stopped fighting back. Putin began to fight back and this has restored some power. I don't think that fighting is the only solution, but you need to always be ready to fight. You should be strong, you should be prepared and that's the only way to create a deterrence. I think that we need to deter future domination, including in network warfare. But if I read that the United States from the 90s onwards has conducted network warfare against its potential enemies (Russia and China, also its potential enemies in the West), for example, by demonising and marginalising some political tendency that could be considered a threat to liberal democracy or gay rights, etc., then I understand that this is something serious. It is not only a conspiracy theory. I am relying in my book on the authoritative text published by American generals. Now, I'm a little bit far from this concern, but I am still working on it, I have read hundreds of publications about this, with all the citations. So, it's a serious thing. It is not just a part of a strategy, it is the most important directive of the American military doctrine that is called 'Full Spectrum Domination'. This doctrine includes domination in the information sphere. This means that you create biased information on the most important issues for the US strategy and then impose it on all the media in the world. You should subvert, control, buy, or impose your will on all the main media, not only American or Western but all nations as well, in order to spread your message. That is the grand scale of aggression being waged against our sovereignty. And we need to respond. The idea of controlling social networks with censorship, for example, is absolutely Stalinist; it is pure liberal democratic censorship against the enemies of liberal democracy. It's ideologically motivated censorship. The West uses this tactic for their ideological, geopolitical, hegemonic purposes. And we shouldn't respond?

N: As I said before, surely both sides need to deescalate at the same time. The point is that for both sides the narrative of fear of the other is the same. For example, from your statements above, the West would say you have just confirmed their fears.

D: Who cares about the West? It is our country, our history, that was artificially destroyed, and stolen from us not by the West, but by the stupidity of Gorbachev in trying to please the West. It's not the problem of the West; it is our country, our state that was stolen. The West applauded. The West made suggestions but the blame is on us, on Gorbachev and his blind politics in front of geopolitical realities. I have spoken with an advisor of Gorbachev, Georgy Shakhnazarov, who wrote the programme on convergency, that is, that we need to converge the two systems: socialism and

capitalism. This text was published in *Pravda* and was called 'The World Society Is Governed'. I consider it to be manifest radical treason of geopolitics because we could not hope to rule the world with the West. If we, for example, abdicated from the communist ideology because geopolitical contradictions were at stake, that was a crime, and not the problem of the abandonment of socialism. I was not a socialist. Once, I was invited by Solovyov and Gordon on Channel 1 TV in the 90s. Before the show I was asked who is the main radical opponent of your position? I said Shakhnazarov, Gorbachev's advisor. It was during Yeltsin's rule, after 1991 and the end of the Soviet Union. I said he (Shakhnazarov) was a real criminal because he wrote the book that had cost us the empire of the Soviet Union. And Shakhnazarov was invited on the show as well to fight with me. I started to blame him, and said 'You are an agent of the West, you are a cifth columnist, you are an idiot, you betrayed our country thinking and dreaming of the governability of the world and have thus sacrificed the great culture of our Motherland, the Soviet Union that is the real Russia'. And interestingly, after being blamed harshly, Shakhnazarov said we ignored geopolitics and so we have lost the real position of our country by thinking only in ideological terms. So our ignorance of geopolitics was precisely the reason that we neglected this dimension. I was a little bit embarrassed because I tried to fight against someone but from the beginning it was a mess of a programme, because at the beginning he recognised that I was right and there was no subject to discuss. But I think that is very important. If we consider the situation as Gorbachev did only on a geopolitical level or the ideological level, maybe they had some kind of reason, like peaceful co-existence. I have nothing against that, but there is a geopolitical failure. If we recognise that the Soviet Union was Eurasia, then the Eurasian Union now is an attempt to recreate it, to do the same, to restore this Russia, this Eurasia and so on. We are obliged to restore that. Ukranians are a part of this fight for this Eurasia. It is not only a Russian-Ukrainian conflict. It is not an ethnic conflict, rather it is a fight for restoring this continental dimension of Eurasia. I think that we need to fight for this using symmetric means, but the case of Skripal doesn't fit into that concept. So, I tried to understand and describe my attitude to Skripal, as well as the Litvinenko case. They are so small in comparison with the real goals we have. So, in my eyes the only logical explanation could be that this is a provocation by the West in order to destroy our serious structures, networks and presence in the West. I think the publication of the GRU agents by the Dutch is a part of that, as well as the American persecution of Russian spies, etc. That is part of the logic of the Western side. Maybe the West needed a kind of reason to do this. And the Skripal case served this. Normally, I have a very good attitude towards *Russia Today*, and it serves a very good purpose. But exposing the stupidity of these two suspects on *Russia Today*, coupled with the idiotic look of Margarita Simonyan, was not a logical response. It seems that this was a kind of Brzezinski-style game. The West is playing its game very well, and we seem to

be playing their game as well, but not to our advantage. So, for example, if it was we who killed Skripal using all this structure in order to do so, then we are doomed. We are mad. In this case we are complete idiots, because it's not a rational way to lead a war…

N: Is Putin in crisis at the moment?

D: Yes, in deep crisis. Not just because of now, but it is a kind of accumulation of the things he did not do. He should do some serious things or make some decisions at some point. If you don't make such a decision, you will delay it. You make a decision in some historical situations, and an absence of a decision is a decision. I don't think Putin has committed any real errors, but he hasn't done some things he absolutely should have done. First of all, on the spiritual and intellectual level, the level of elite, the strategic level, the institutional level, the level of Russian Logos, the level of the circulation of new persons in the government, and on the level of the economy, the level of the establishment of geopolitical institutions. He didn't do these things in time. Now, for example, as I have said, he didn't invade Eastern Ukraine, pretending that it would be too much. That was a mistake in my eyes. And I am rarely mistaken in such analysis. But now I agree that he is approaching a very critical moment. It is his last constitutional term. So now he should act not as Putin the leader of the present, but as Putin the leader of the future. He has lost the time to prepare for that, for these historical issues. Now, he is not a conventional leader dealing with ordinary situations. Now, he is in front of history and he isn't prepared for that. And now the consequences from the small mistakes he made before or is making now, accumulate more and more and more. And so that is the end of Putin. What we see now is not only some technical problem that could be quickly and easily overcome; the problem is symptomatic. Putin has no common cause with the Church. The existing system in Russia cannot continue like this; it may be enough for the present, but not for the future. So, there is a transition from Yeltsin's time to what? Putin didn't define *to what*, or who his heir is. The heir is important. The problem is not the heir, but the concept. The heritage is the problem. If the heritage is correct, then we could examine the heir, and see if he fits or doesn't. But if there is no clear idea about heritage there is a problem. For example, if there is an economic focus for the future, then maybe it's Kudrin, Medvedev or another as the potential heir, or if it is my group, the Army, the Russian revival, the Russian world, Orthodoxy, revival of the empire, then it is Sergei Shoigu. Up to now Putin has not defined his heritage. So we can only guess what it will be. There is no real strategic programme, there is no future and this absence of the future multiplies the small problems in the historical sense making them really dangerous. That is the problem. The problem is systemic. Putin now should make some step in response, because what will follow after the decision of Constantinople? There will be violent aggression against Orthodox churches that belong to the Russian Moscow Patriarchate in Ukraine. The

absolute majority of monasteries and churches belong to this patriarchate. So the problem is systemic. There will be violence. Putin should react.

N: How should he react?

D: He should react in a manner he cannot. So he has lost the chance to react properly. We should invade Ukraine and clear up the West's mess. Everything will be quite clear from then on. And maybe I think in that case the other part of Ukraine would split because we will cut off their possibility to exist. That is why they insisted so much on sanctioning me and stopping our tanks from hitting targets in Donetsk and so on. And the pressure on Putin was great. Putin hesitated and he has lost this moment. Now he will be obliged to react again. How can he react? Now he cannot react, he cannot stop it. So we are blamed for being invaders in Donbas. Who will hear Putin? Who will stop this violence against the Russian Orthodox Church? Why will Europe, which is behind the Maidan, help to respect the rights of the Moscow Patriarchate? Nobody will care. And that is logical geopolitics; it is nothing personal. So there will be blood, there will be violence, and Putin will be pulled into this situation more and more every day. Russia will ask 'Putin, why don't you do anything?' He cannot bomb Kiev because they're us; it's like bombing ourselves or like bombing Ryazan or Smolensk.

N: This is one of the absurdities of the war. Actually the people you are supposedly defending, they've been the main victims. Of the 10,300 people who have died, the majority have been in the Donbas region, who are supposedly part of the Russian world. So the war is nonsensical in that sense.

D: The responsibility for the deaths in the Donbas is partly on Moscow because we should have stopped the war by increasing it with the full spectrum domination of Novorossiya, after that maybe Kiev, then maybe go further or stop.

N: That's war with NATO. That's nuclear war…

D: No, we were blackmailed by nuclear war in South Ossetia, Abkhazia, Crimea, Donbas. No, nobody will kill all humanity for these Ukrainians, Western Ukrainians. The price is not enough. Putin once said something like this, 'If you attack Russia and we are in real danger, then we will take revenge and you will destroy humanity'. That is an existential threat. If we are fighting for the existence of our people as a state, as an independent pole in the multipolar world, we should be ready to do this. Without this, nobody will care about our sovereignty; it will be absolutely different.

N: But can you look at it from the Western point of view? You carry out that plan of action, you take Kiev, bomb Kiev, or even go further. What on earth do you think those sitting in Washington or London or NATO headquarters are going to do when they see this as a major threat to the security and territorial integrity of Europe?

D: Sanctions.

N: No, not only. The sanctions have been tried and clearly failed when used alone. And if you take a whole sovereign country they would be very worried about who's

next. So they would no doubt use huge sanctions as part of their response, but it is very likely that their response would also have a military dimension…

D: Now… But if we took Kiev four years ago nobody would have understood that sanctions would not work.

N: I thought you said Putin should do this now?

D: No, we should have done it in the past, four years ago, in 2014. We should have occupied, invaded Eastern Ukraine and maybe Kiev four years ago with Yanukovych on our side. And being invited there not as invaders but as defenders of the legitimate president of Ukraine.

N: Like you did in Syria with Assad?

D: At the same juridical level as many states in history did. For example, as the Americans always do by supporting some president as legitimate instead of some putschist who made a coup d'état, for example, in Africa. That's an everyday event, nothing special. So, Yanukovych invites us in to save Ukraine from the putschists and we come in with tanks. But they say Yanukovych wouldn't agree. However, there are so many ways to make him…

N: Sorry, are you saying that this option was tried? Did someone try to get Yanukovych to invite the Russians in?

D: No, because Putin has lost this crucial chance.

N: No, I mean in 2014 was it tried?

D: I could not say the details. Some tried and some didn't, but we know the result. It didn't happen. In my opinion it would have been very easy, but it was thwarted by the lie of the pro-Western group around Putin. They said the West, with no threat of nuclear war and only small and temporary sanctions, would accept Crimea as a part of Russia if we stopped there and if we recognised Poroshenko. And that we had guarantees for this from Kissinger and some other persons in Obama's administration. Putin believed these liars from the West. So he stopped the operation and now we have the result. How to behave now? Tomorrow they will have the Lavra monasteries. What can Putin do? Now he cannot invade Eastern Ukraine because Putin has already recognised the legitimacy of Poroshenko. He could blame him and so on. Yanukovych is out of the game. The absence of real support for Donbas during the four years has very negatively affected the Russian image in Eastern Ukraine. No one believes us anymore. Four years ago they would have believed us and they wanted to follow us. My friends in Kharkov and Odessa were putting up Russian flags on buildings. We almost had that. But now there will be an occupation, there will be violence, dictatorship. Ukrainian and anti-Russian propaganda did its job well during these four years, brainwashing the Ukrainian people. So now is the worst moment to start the war and we cannot respond with anything.

N: You have the presidential election in Ukraine next year. Do you see any hope in this?

D: We will do something to try to influence it, but what can we do? It is impossible in the present state of Ukraine because there is no more Crimea with two million pro-Russian voters; there is only a nationalist liberal pro-Western dictatorship. How could we hope of democratically getting our candidate? Now it is impossible. So it is out of the question. Anybody who comes to power in Ukraine will be against us.

N: Do you think Ukraine is now lost to Russia? At the moment Ukraine seems to be striving to build the closest possible relationship with NATO and the EU and is looking to make this trend absolutely irreversible.

D: No, in general. But under Putin — yes. Putin has shown his limits now. It is clear that nothing could happen with him. He could not invade Ukraine now. It is not the right moment. I think something serious would have to happen here in order to restore some relations with Ukraine. In the present situation, with the present government and history of both sides, it is impossible. But Ukraine is not lost[37] .

N: Ok, moving onto another topic. What do you think has been the geopolitical significance of 2018?

D: I think nothing serious happened this year. I think that peace in Korea is the right step for Trump. I don't think that there was some turning point in 2018. There is a continuation of the tendencies that were formed before, most of them long before. It is just nothing special I would say. So the confrontation with the West is normal and inevitable. Trump's position is growing stronger. He still stands and that is already a victory. He has been in power for two years, and for such a so-called marginal, extravagant and politically incorrect president, that's a victory, but that is not a victory of 2018. That is the victory of Trump or rather the population of American voters who have made such a great decision, a very funny decision by the way. And I think that the victory in Europe of Salvini and Di Maio, the first creation in the history of modernity of a purely populist government lead by right populists uniting with left populists against the liberal centre, is precisely the symbol of the future of Europe. Europe will be split between populists and globalists. Populist leaders against the globalist elite; that's the scenario for Europe in the time to come. But it is only in the first stage; it is not yet a turning point. It is a turning point maybe in Italian history, very important, but not yet in Europe. Maybe it will provoke a civil war in Europe; that could be a solution…

N: Solution for whom? Not for Europe…

D: Who cares about Europe here? We care about the end of the liberal world order. There are two Europes: the populist Europe of peoples on the left and right and the liberal Europe of elites. When the left and right populists in Europe are divided, the liberal globalist Europe wins. When left and right populists overcome this division, there is little chance for liberal globalists, and so the Europe of peoples wins. And that is serious. When our left-right populists can overcome the existing elites they become

the subject of history. So Europeans should first define their camp; if they don't want to decide, the decision will be made without them by the logic of history. So, Europeans, please choose your camp! Either you are with your globalist, pro-American, liberal elite in favour of gay marriage, trans-humanism, artificial intelligence, and Brussels bureaucracy — that is one camp, please fight for that or be used by it — or you are on the side of the people of Europe (leftists and rightists, it doesn't matter), and if you don't want any more immigration and liberal domination, then choose another Europe, a united, strong, culturally traditional, classical Europe with Christian roots, social fairness and justice. That is the other Europe. Europe is split already. Civil war has already started. And for Russia this will be a kind of relief for the time being because if this starts in a more radical way there will be a split in the Euro-Atlantic pole. It will become weaker and we'll become stronger.

N: So you are hoping and planning for chaos and civil war in Europe? Is that what you are saying?

D: No, it will happen in spite of us. If we could ignite it, maybe we would, maybe not. I don't know, but it can happen in spite of us, by its own logic; it is not our problem. We could try to influence it on the side of the populists. They are our strategic and historical allies. But we have no power to change the situation. It is an inner European problem. And it is clear we will play on the side of the populists because they are mostly pro-Russian or neutral. So they are anti-liberal, anti-American in the absolute majority. But we could not manipulate them or the situation. It is up to Europeans to decide its own destiny. But if it happens, it could give us an opportunity. For example, everybody would be occupied by Europe and in that moment we could expand our influence and restore a kind of Greater Russia in the form of the Tsarists' empire and end the compromises that are accumulating more and more in our own society from Yeltsin's time onwards. So, it would be a historic chance for us. This conflict in Europe will be delayed or it will be solved in a peaceful way, which I would prefer. I prefer the democratic victory of the populist forces — democratic, peaceful and completely legitimate. But it is up to you. In Italy there was no civil war but they completely changed the paradigm. And the most important result of 2018 is the fact that the Italian government is still there…

N: That's the point. This paradigm could change very easily and very quickly as Italian governments seem to change every six months or even less sometimes…

D: Yes, but six months is already our victory because it is symbolic; it is an example for others to repeat. With every day that Italy has Salvini in power, the greater the joy it is. For example, first of all I consult on Facebook with my Italian friends and Trump inspires them as well. If Trump is there, then there is a kind of good thing on the American side. So, the hardline globalist position is not clear and effective and there is a little diversification of it. And that is enough to create a kind of problem for the

working of the system of global hegemony. Thus, the Trump and Salvini governments are a source of joy for me. But the source of sorrow, sadness and concern for me is — at the end of the day — the incapacity of Putin to formulate the great project of Russia's future. If we fall, that's your chance to delay the accumulation of threats and problems. So that is more or less the balance. Everybody tries to use the business of the other…

N: In that context, are you interested at all in improving Anglo-Russian relations?

D: That's a long story. I thought that after Brexit, for the first time in recent modern history, Russia and the UK had no more logical geopolitical reasons for confrontation because the UK is not a part of Europe anymore and has lost its mission to subvert the Franco-German continental organisation of Europe. So, Europe can finally turn into a Land Power and the UK won't subvert that process in order to play on the side of the United States. That is a happy moment for Franco-German Europe and a happy moment for the UK as it does not have to play this negative role anymore…

N: Unfortunately, it seems unlikely that the UK's role will change much in that respect. Conventional British wisdom has it that if there's a strong power on the continent of Europe, there is a high probability that the UK will be invaded by it. That's the problem with a strong Franco-German continental organisation of Europe for the UK. So, the UK will never leave Europe no matter what its status with regard to the European Union is. It is bound to Europe by geography, culture, history, religion, etc. And it seems likely that this centuries-old geopolitical strategy of preventing the rise of a regional hegemon in Europe will also continue outside of the EU…

D: As far as I understand it, the UK lost half a century ago all its subjectiveness and geopolitical sovereignty, ceding the decisions on such matters instead to the United States, and conserving only the role of a secondary helper of the US. So, the recent policy of the UK in Europe was not sovereign. It was a kind of playing with the United States and was not based on a consideration of the sovereign national interests of the UK. It was a sort of dream. But finally its goal became to subvert the Franco-German creation of a continental Union, to destroy Europe from within. If you stop this after Brexit, that gives an opportunity to Europe and to Great Britain, which is no longer an empire and has no reason to confront Russia, as it is not an enemy. Russia is more of a competitor with other empires. So, if you are not an empire, we are not competitive with you. If you end your fascination with the United States and if after Brexit you have lost your negative role as a disruptor in the structure of Europe, then what's next? The UK after Brexit being totally isolated from Europe, from the United States, from its imperial past, should find a new destiny, new horizons, a new historical strategy, a new identity as well. Its new identity could be a return to the fight of dragons, between the white dragon of German identity and the red dragon of the Celtic identity of the Welsh, Irish, Scottish, in order to revise the cultural richness of the split English personality and discover a new balance, a new harmony, and a new dialect that geopolitically in its

isolation could help it to concentrate on its inner Logos. This in turn could turn the UK geopolitically into a good ally of Russia because it will create a special pole not totally coinciding with Europe, not totally coinciding with the United States. And using all the big, intellectual, intelligence infrastructure that traditionally the UK has had, it could try to regain its special role in the world not with United States, or with Europe, or with Russia, but by itself. And having great knowledge of the Islamic world, the Arab world, the Indian world, Southern Asia, and a commonwealth that could be restructured on completely new, non imperial, non Atlanticist, non liberal lines, it could discover new ways of cooperation with Russia. But this idea of mine was for after Brexit. I visited London recently and I tried to find some confirmation of this theory among like-minded thinkers in the English establishment, but I found that nobody thinks like this in the UK. In fact, I discovered that nobody thinks at all in the UK because if you cannot think outside of Brexit, of the post-Brexit perspective, you cannot think. So you are totally involved in that, and are engaged in chimeric dreams. You still try to participate in the European Union, you still try to be an ally of the US, you still try to be an enemy of Russia…

N: In some ways Britain and Russia mirror each other. They are both great post-imperial states who are struggling to find their position in the post-modern world. And one could also argue from the modern British perspective that Britain and Russia could be great friends if Russia rejected its imperial aspirations, accepted the status quo, became friendly towards the EU and the US, and concerned itself with how best it can develop in such an environment. With both choices essentially what it comes down to for each side is a complete rejection of all its history and civilisation for the past 500 years or so. This solution is no doubt unsatisfactory for both sides, and that's probably why you didn't find any current support for your ideas in the UK because it's a complete rejection of half a millennium of our history.

D: Yes, I think that half a millennium of your history was wrong…

N: It's not wrong, it's just history…

D: Wrong from my point of view. It was thalassocratic, modern, liberal. I thought that maybe some English intellectuals or politicians would think about returning 500 years back to the roots and constants of British identity that are based on the unresolved duality between the German and Celtic identities, which are mixed together but yet still in conflict. So, thalassocracy, liberalism, capitalism, colonisation, all these were a result of its unsolved inner problems. So, I thought maybe you would make a kind of reconsideration of this erroneous choice you made in order to return to this point of bifurcation in your history and concentrate on your pre-imperial, pre-modern identity…

N: Some people might agree that it could be an interesting direction for the UK to go in. But we can say exactly the same thing for Russia. Russia could return to its pre-imperial and pre-modern identity and forget about grand global geopolitics.

D: Interesting, but my idea was more or less the same. So, I am speaking now about after Brexit in the concrete case of the UK where such a thought is possible, and we could try to establish a kind of intellectual dialogue with representatives of such ideas in politics, philosophy, museums, royal families and traditionalists and some maybe extravagant but interesting groups and circles. I didn't find such people. I was invited by my friends, Englishmen, who understand what I meant at least and they tried to do something. They have very good positions in society, but they couldn't find anybody, nobody of weight, to discuss these things with. We organised some discussion but it wasn't with people of weight because of the total absence of a post-Brexit mentality. So, if we speak about a return to a pre-Brexit mentality, of ending a process that could be revised in the future, we could just imagine that we had no reason to do that. It is understandable if it lasted and the same situation continued, we could not speak about a new kind of Russian or British relations because there is no ideological basis for this. I thought that some British men would think like this. During the Soviet Union, I was one of the rare persons that thought in terms of the post-Soviet period. So, during the 80s I composed a song about that, that the end of the Soviet Union was near, in 1982 it wasn't so near, but I lived with a post-Soviet consciousness in the last Soviet decades. It is a very interesting experience and I suspected that maybe some Englishmen as well are already living in a post-Brexit system. I didn't find them; maybe they are out there, maybe it was the wrong choice of people. I spoke with some specialists on Russia, but I didn't find a person who could share anything except one Montenegrin duke who was completely in agreement with me, but he was much more anti-Western and anti-British that me. So, he was in total agreement with everything I said or everything I didn't say because Serbian and Montenegrin patriotism is the same as ours. But I didn't find any similar British people. So, maybe the point of starting such a dialogue should be delayed until at least a post-Brexit consciousness appears. But I agree with your point. So, if we speak about the return of Britain to the pre-imperial period, then I think that it is absolutely imperative for Europe to return to the pre-Colombian time. I think the Colombian choice was wrong. And I think the Pillars of Hercules with its slogan 'nec plus ultra' was an absolute geopolitical law for European culture, 'You shouldn't go further'. If you go further, you will be lost. That's why the violation of this geopolitical law by Mediterranean society, European society, was precisely the beginning of modernity. It was, in my opinion, the fall of Europe and the loss of its identity and the perversion of Christianity and so on. So a return to pre-modernity for England is a return precisely to the time before Henry VIII. When Catholic and continental England was a part of Europe, it was France-England, there was no border, they were very close. And you are right in this sense, if we consider a return to the pre-modern identity of England, we should oblige Russia to return to its pre-modern role as well and

abandon the Russian imperialism of the Tsarist and Soviet periods, with its geopolitical expansion and recognising the right of the other. I agree…

N: That's a possible solution then…

D: It's not a solution, but it's at least reasonable. And we could and should promote that. The problem is that Russian modernity was different from the European one. It was imposed on us and was superficial and had a different structure from the beginning. I'm studying that now in my book on the Russian Logos. So, we have a problem with the *Dvoryane* (the Russian nobility), and not with capitalists, traders, merchants, the moving power of modernity. We had no capitalism. Now we try to reconstruct it because only thirty years before we had no such thing as capitalism. But modernity was imposed on us by the Dvoryane, by the nobles and not the aristocrats. They received the right to have this place in the aristocracy by their merits and not by their birthright. This is not so bad in principle, but it created a kind of special group emanating from the people into the aristocracy that was based on a completely different structure. This was the cause of all evil in our history, and we should revise their place, their role in history. We should blame Tsarist imperialism for many things, but that is not the same as a return to the same point in history because we didn't participate in the Columbian world.

N: True, but you had your own Columbian experience. Perhaps you have heard of the famous English historian called Bernard Pares? He believed that Russian history, just like European history, is full of colonisation. So, just as the Americans went out west, Russia expanded east and south and conquered over a hundred different ethnic groups. Thus, according to him, you had your own version of expansion and conquest of native peoples. This can be seen most clearly in the conquest of Siberia.

D: Up to a certain point, yes. But the natives still live there. And where are the Indians?

N: But the natives of Siberia are not independent, are they? The native Indians are still there in the US as well, and some of them do have some sort of independent tribal status with certain rights…

D: Where is the independence of the Irish people in Northern Ireland? I am a defender of the identities of these people. But, the political independence and conservation of identities are two different things. But I agree in the principle that we as well should return to our roots and there could be debates of what those roots are, what the point in our history is. We should exchange opinions, for example, and insist on some aspects, try to define better the meaning of some processes in our respective societies. And if there is a mainstream understanding of the new position of England, and the new position of Russia in the new world, then we could start a dialogue. To do so we need to be sure of a post-Brexit kind of mentality. This is something to create. We shouldn't say we know what it is. We don't know, but we absolutely know what it is

not. For example, the present way of thinking in England is not the post-Brexit way, it is pre-Brexit. And if that is so and if it continues, there will be no possibility of any kind of dialogue. If we could imagine overcoming this or going beyond it to the border, then dialogue could start. I think we need to go beyond Putin. Putin has fulfilled his mission, he has done all he can. He stays in power, and is stronger than ever, but he doesn't possess the key for Russia's future.

N: Who is next for Russia then?

D: Nobody knows, and we cannot predict. It is a fight for the future because just as the UK has a pre-Brexit mentality, Putin's mentality doesn't want to let another mentality appear. This pre-Brexit mentality clings to power and tries to last forever. It will take an eternity to get out of Europe, the process will be unending. And after that, you will have another referendum until you make the right choice and Soros is satisfied. So, let's vote again and so on. It is similar in Russia. Putinism is somehow doomed because it has no part in the future. Putin has no spiritual strategy for the future, no 'great idea'. So, we need to think beyond Putin, but Putin doesn't let us do it. He tries to keep his power on our minds up to the very end, the final moment just as the Communist Party wanted to do just before its total disappearance in 1991. So, that is a normal situation not only in terms of dictatorships, but in democracy as well; nobody wants to recognise their approaching end. I am absolutely sure that the European Union and Britain are approaching their end, but nobody wants to recognise that it will happen. It is the same with Putin. He clings not to power, but to the status quo. They are different things. He tries to postpone everything, to make the status quo everlasting, until he declares the name of his heir at the last moment, and then it may be too late. If we consider his government inside of Russia, he postponed serious decisions to the next term. Now there are no more terms[38] . So, he should make decisions now, but he doesn't want to do this or maybe he can't (or maybe he is hiding his inability to take real decisions). So, he will leave us in a difficult and unbalanced situation. There is no guarantee that his heir will be recognised. So the heir appointed by Putin will be obliged to respond to very serious challenges. He will have to please people to become legitimate and Putin didn't endow him with great strategy, adequate institutions, or a 'great idea' because he is a realist ruler, a pure Caesarist figure in Gramsci's terms.

N: And do you have any personal interest or ambition in this direction?

D: Absolutely. I am involved in Russian history. I was involved in the Soviet period…

N: No, I mean politically, becoming a politician yourself…

D: No, not in that role because I don't consider myself as a kind of formal exterior leader. And when I tried to play this role it was disastrous for me. I can understand the political processes better than many leaders, but when I became a leader I became more stupid than them. So there is a different form of thinking. So I should recognise…

N: …that you are more suited to the role of Machiavelli, the advisor, the whisperer in the ear of the prince.

D: Yes, absolutely. I am Merlin. I always wanted and tried to play the role of Merlin with different leaders. I am still trying. And I feel comfortable in this position; it is natural for me. And I have Merlin's plan for the future of Russia.

N: But you haven't found the new Arthur yet?

D: Not yet, I'm still searching.

Later on that day we moved into the heart of the new Moscow to discuss some esoteric themes.

N: This rather bizarre location seems a fitting place in which to discuss more about some of the eccentricities of modernity. So, without further ado, what are your thoughts on life in space and on other planets? What do you think about it? How do you philosophically approach this subject?

D: Our understanding of planets, space and time is erroneous because it is modern. All modern scientific laws are fake, and based on totally erroneous presumptions and projections. I totally agree with Bruno Latour's concept that all scientific knowledge and our presentation of the universe, planets, and extraterrestrial life is based on hallucinations that appear as scientific doctrines. These are projections of dreams, imagination. Matter is imagined. When we speak about futurological projects of life on other planets, we enter the structure of imagination. It's useless to dream about that because we don't understand the world we live in. We don't see things that happen, we don't examine and study our own imagination, its structures and mechanisms. We don't concentrate on the existential depth of our own soul, mind, world we live in, Earth…We try to escape from that, from unsolved problems, projecting them in a bizarre way on other planets. We should return to Earth without considering it as something material, a body. It's an ontological level of reality. This level should be explored phenomenologically. Instead of escaping Earth and projecting our vision on other planets, asking if there is life out there, we should concentrate on life on our planet. What is life? What is a planet? A planet is something moving in Greek, it's an idea of movement; it's not a body. A planet is a change.

N: So you are not curious about discovering an alien life form? And you are not fearful of an alien civilisation coming to conquer the Earth?

D: It's a modern interpretation of traditional entities who live around us: angels, devils and spirits. I think that spirits exist because our tradition affirms so. Spirits, demons, angels, archangels are everywhere, inside of us, in our imagination, in the ground, in the air, on mythological and metaphysical levels of reality. Some of them are the highest, so they create a horizon of the sky, and some of them live underground.

Because a modern man's imagination is reduced by materialism, this kind of imagination acquires a form of aliens, spaceships, alien invasion, little green men, etc. Meanwhile they are already real. But they should be reinterpreted. Sometimes they are more real than we are because we live in a world we don't understand. We should concentrate on that in order to create or discover a new form of life, or to fear, to hope. The sociological reason for the existence of aliens is the unification of the world. Any kind of political unification demands friends and foes. In terms of humans, we should have non-humans. In that sense we could speak of humanity in political terms. So, aliens are a sociological projection of the unification of the world and the possibility of speaking of humanity in concrete terms.

N: Are you saying that if alien life is discovered, that could lead to global peace and unity?

D: The idea of aliens is based on a misinterpretation of spirits and their entity used geopolitically to create an imaginary virtual enemy, and that could be a reason for the unification of humanity. That's a sociological instrument of an incorrect interpretation of spiritual reality.

N: But the USSR took part in the space race and Russia has a distinguished cosmological record. Are you rejecting all this work? And on a more basic level, do you not believe in the idea of planets as something more than just a sense of movement? Even the ancient Egyptians, Babylonians and Romans seem to have had a deeper understanding of them…

D: I believe in everything that is ancient. On *The Adam's Family* show there was a moment when someone offered them a business idea. The first question they asked was if it was an old business. They said, 'If it's an old one, I accept it'. So, I believe in what the ancients believed. I believe in planets but not the modern interpretation of them. Modernity is wrong as such. Every explanation it gives is based on an erroneous interpretation of reality, including the word 'planet'. It is opposed to stars, for the ancients that was the case. Planets and stars are interchangeable. I believe in planets in the ancient sense as something moving with a cosmic rhythm in the sky. What is moving should be interpreted in the old way. Jean-Claude Juncker needed aliens to promote his globalist agenda. Carl Gustav Jung studied aliens in his psycho-analytical approach as a projection of the collective unconsciousness. He identified a round flying object as a projection of the Mandala, a symbol of the unconsciousness which is common to different cultures and peoples. Outside of Juncker, the instrumentalisation of this kind of imagination is completely useless. It's better to return to the old beliefs, to rediscover dragons, for example. I agree with Gilbert Duran's interpretation of what a dragon is. A dragon is more real than any other beast because it's an idea of all of them. It's a beast in its essence; it unites every kind. Everything that inspires fear or a feeling of power, aggression, threat in the animal world. There is an eagle, lion, etc. They are all signs of

the zodiac put together to create a symbol of the perfect beast. And being an archetype of all animals, a dragon is more real than any beast. It's more interesting to explain dragons, spirits…

N: So you believe these creatures actually exist?

D: Absolutely. I'm sure.

N: And witches?

D: Those too. If they were burned, there must have been something.

N: Would you burn witches these days, Alex? How would you deal with them in modern society?

D: If you stop burning witches, they are not witches anymore. It means they are accepted as members of society, like Hilary Clinton and Theresa May. Something's wrong with her (May), in the way she moves, she may be a reptile. She dances in a very strange way. She may be a ghost. I thought she was imitating an African dance, but she did it in an alien manner.

N: Yes, maybe. Still, how should we deal with all these creatures today?

D: We can't put a dragon in a zoo, because if we accept it, it will no longer be a dragon.

N: The UK and Russia shouldn't be fighting each other; we should be fighting dragons together. We are fighting the wrong enemy now.

D: Yes, but I think dragons are on our side, they are a part of tradition. We should fight neither each other, nor dragons, but modernity, robots…

N: Modernity takes dragons and wizards away from us…

D: Yes, we should punish them for that and take back different creatures like elves, giants. Something like that is going on now: the Titans are coming back. We consider them to be a modern project. We should reinterpret them. Modernity is just a wrong interpretation of the same reality, and not a new reality. We didn't kill dragons, we lost communication with them. They are here, we should rediscover them and save them. Nothing is lost. Maybe we forgot something. That's the sense of *aletheia* in the Greek language — truth. It is something forgotten or fallen in the river Lethe. We need to take it out. To forget is not to kill. To find aliens we need to concentrate on our traditional imagination. We have no need for a new kind of perverted modernist technological imagination when we have an organic traditional imagination; red and white dragons are much more important than Theresa May or Brexit. Those dragons are still fighting.

N: And the Baba Yagas in the Russian tradition?

D: Yes. She is a living entity. She was an image of the Great Mother in Russian folklore. All these entities are alive. We need to give them a place in our lives. Some of them may be dangerous though. In the Celtic tradition there was a war of the trees. That's what Tolkien took from the ancient tradition. Let's think about that. Let trees fight

instead of our armies. Maybe their problems are more important than ours. I believe in old style imagination and despise modernisation.

N: Moving onto a slightly different topic, a little bird tells me that you are now a spokesman for a brand of perfume. Is this true?

D: Yes, for my Italian friends. They have been inspired by my work and created the new line of perfume: Eurasia, Earth (Terra). And they are working on a 'Radical Subject'perfume. I participated in the discussions. And I share my opinion with them about it. Perfume is a kind of language. There are different types of language: common language, gestures, body, science, pictures, music, feelings and perfume as well. Artistically perfume fits the possibility of expressing metaphysical ideas. Why not?

N: The philosophical perfume; it's the sexiest perfume, yes? And do you wear them? Do they help you to think?

D: Philosophical perfume, as all metaphysical things, shouldn't be pragmatic. They shouldn't have a goal or help someone. Even smell is not necessary. It's different because it is a goal in itself, as philosophy and Logos are. So, you just feel it and that's it.

N: So, it could just be a spray of water, for example?

D: A spray of water still has some purpose; for example, it provides a sense of freshness.

N: You can create your own interpretation: for others it's a spray of water, for you it's philosophical perfume.

D: Maybe. There is something universal in real philosophical perfume, but it's not made yet. We are working on it. I may be disappointed with the result though. Our perfume is being made by a very old Italian company that has been making perfume for many centuries. It started in a small village where the whole perfume industry started. Next year, in May, we are going to make a great exhibition in Rome that will consist of comics and other pieces of art, including pictures. The artists have already prepared it. It's a multi-dimensional exhibition with visual art, music, and pictures.

N: So you are trying to explore the artistic dimensions of Eurasianism?

D: Yes. My Italian friends are trying to develop the Fourth Artistic Theory based on the Fourth Political Theory. It's an open question of what it would actually look like. But when we try to imagine things… we should not be similar to the dominant globalist liberal agenda of art, with its combination of robots, AI and humans.

N: And presumably this includes VR or enhanced reality as they call it in the West?

D: Yes, enhanced reality. This type of art certainly shouldn't be individual, sub-individual or super individual or indeed dogmatic. It should be inspired by some idea but the manifestation of this idea should be absolutely free from any dogmatism. So we couldn't make just any art project. We could inspire artists to do some piece of art, and acknowledge or recognise them. But we couldn't impose rules on them because it is a

process… Post-modernity is an attempt to overcome the border between tradition and modernity to reinstall the dignity of classical art inside of the modern world. It's risky and dangerous. Morozov is very famous. He's a Russian who lives in Italy. He's one of the best modern Russian sculptors. We also have painters and performers and people from theatre, many of them, and not only classical or traditional artists. We cannot easily dismiss modernity; it's too deep. We should recognise it, but not agree with it. We should identify it, fix it and say that we don't accept it, but acknowledge that it exists because we are modern. We don't agree with ourselves being modern. This doesn't mean that we can return to tradition; we should and have to, but we may fail. It's open traditionalism. If we repeat the things pre-modern people said, that is not a return, it is a simulacrum because modernity is inside of us, not outside. We cannot dismiss it so easily. That's the problem for the art of the Fourth Political Theory.

N: But, modern liberal art already tries to do a similar thing to this. For example, it tries to comment on, mock or make provocative statements about classical art…

D: Formally, it is close to that. But, the strategy and meaning are different. Their idea is to destroy the classical. And when traditionalists try to kill modernity by using the same elements that post-modernism does, Right post-modernism, it is post-modernity as anti-modernity, but not as a continuation of modernity. We can't be sure who has reached the goal. Art is a very special thing. We can't programme it; if we do, it can be a disaster.

N: To me the major failures of modern art are that the pieces very often have no innate beauty and require exhaustive lectures to prove that they are indeed art. Classical art was beautiful in itself, and any fool could recognise this beauty, and you didn't need a PhD in 'waffleonomics' to prove that it was art. So, if Fourth Political Theory's art is trying to go back to the genius of classical art, its beauty should speak for itself.

D: Yes, absolutely. For example, a dragon is beautiful and we don't need an explanation of why; it just is.

In the early evening we met in Alex's office in downtown Moscow for our last conversation. It proved to be a frank and cathartic experience.

N: 'In my end is my beginning', said T. S. Eliot. In that spirit, as this is our final meeting, I will return to the beginning of our discussions. As I recall, my very first question to you was about your status in the West as the 'most dangerous philosopher in the world'. To put the matter bluntly, should the West be frightened of you? Perhaps it is just a matter of how you are perceived there. For example, there are two photos of you circulating on the internet — I'm sure you are aware of them — one with you holding a rocket launcher and another a machine gun. So, this obviously begs the question, are you

really just a man of words, theories and ideas? Or is there something more concrete for the West to be frightened of?

D: I think yes, because to think is dangerous, to live is dangerous, to be a human is dangerous and it is always a risk to be a human. A philosopher is the person who reminds us how risky and dangerous it is to live, and how dangerous the process of thought is. Because that is the essence of a man. Philosophers who are comfortable, banal, and completely understandable, or are too academic and engaged in technical details of philosophy, and who are innocent in the eyes of majority, they are not real philosophers. They are sub-philosophers. A normal philosopher should be dangerous, more dangerous than anything else, more than a man with a gun or even a nuclear weapon, because a philosopher attacks the essence of a human being, and not just the body. It's the essence of life, the metaphysical essence. This is more dangerous than we could imagine. We live in a pitiful world that has forgotten how dangerous life is. If philosophy is considered dangerous in a negative sense and we don't accept or recognise the challenge, or try to understand the thought of such a philosopher, and when we don't mobilise ourselves to give a response, then we are doomed. When they call me a dangerous philosopher, they try to say that I'm a very bad man. But the intention is wrong. Maybe, I'm not so good…

N: But, can you explain specifically the context of those pictures I referred to? Why are you holding a rocket launcher, or a machine gun next to a tank? Are you capable of more than just thoughts and ideas?

D: Thoughts can hurt. Thought is a deadly weapon. That's how I understand what philosophy is. For example, Nietzsche proposed using a hammer to make philosophy. The correct translation in the 21st century isn't a hammer because it isn't dangerous anymore. Now it may be a Stinger rocket, this is much more refreshing. I don't kill with arms. But I try to remind people that to live, to think and to be a human is dangerous. When they read my book they can't immediately understand what it's all about; these pictures help them to understand these ideas.

N: So, the picture of you with a rocket launcher is just a philosophical photo stunt?

D: It's a metaphor. It's a sign of my engagement in the geopolitical struggle. Nobody can be neutral in this conflict we are in. War is the father of things, as Heraclitus said. In this war, the most important decision is to choose a camp. There is no neutrality; a philosopher can't be above power. He can't be balanced and neutral. He can't compare objectively the interests of one and the other, nor make a balanced decision. That's a wrong understanding. He is always in the battle. He defends his friends and attacks his enemies. Let's take liberal philosophy as an example and the most popular liberal philosopher of the 20th century, Karl Popper, the teacher of George Soros and the father of expanding liberal thought, which is the new official ideology of the West. What was the name of Karl Popper's most famous book? It was called *Open Society*. How

friendly it sounds, how sexy! Let's be friends. But we forget the full title of this book: *The Open Society and Its Enemies*[39] . So, there are those who are friendly and fun as well as those who are against the liberal paradise. I'm one of the enemies of the Open Society. Open Society partisans are launching missiles against us, against the enemies of the Open Society, killing us, destroying our society, our culture and everyone who doesn't agree with this funny Open Society agenda, everyone who rejects modernity, post-modernity, and liberalism. There is no way we can be neutral. If we are liberals, we defend liberal values and ideology. We kill the enemy. And who is the enemy? What is the object to kill, to destroy, and to isolate? According to Karl Popper, every illiberal thinker is an enemy of the Open Society. That's a normal, totalitarian attitude. You're welcome if you are a Nazi. If you have a problem with Hitler, or are a Jew, a Gipsy, a Russian, then shit can happen. It is the same logic with the communists. If you are pro-Stalin, a working class proletarian with no noble roots, welcome to our paradise. If you have a problem with that, you'll be destroyed. So, in the liberal society, you are welcome if you are an LGBT, ecologist, feminist, post-humanist. You can be different and you can enjoy. But you are doomed like a Jew in Nazi Germany or a bourgeois, anti-communist dissident in the Soviet Union, or if you are from a straight family with strict traditions. That is how totalitarianism works. In this situation we need to choose a camp. We can be on one side or the other. Only two choices are possible: the Open Society or its enemies. In any case, we are on the front lines; we are engaged in the struggle, the war. But we can understand and recognise the fact that we are biased and mobilised as we are on the front. We are brainwashed (totally) and we participate in the same war: globalists against populists and traditionalists. I identify with my camp; I'm against the Open Society, Western hegemony, liberalism. I declare this openly. I'm not Putin's propagandist, or a Russian nationalist…

N: So you reject these labels the West has attached to you?

D: It's normal to demonise your enemy. It's propaganda. We describe an enemy as satanic and completely inhuman… When there is war, there is propaganda; you are biased, brainwashed, we shouldn't reject the propaganda. I simply don't hear what's going on in the other camp. I consider them to be my enemies. All the mass media follow the same pattern, they repeat the same insults against me, the same passages, and wrong perverted phrases, but I don't care. It's normal to be blamed, demonised, marginalised during war. If your words are taken out of context, if you are perverted, if you are insulted, it's normal to be destroyed or killed. I have no problem with that. In my view, not only do these labels fail to describe my position, but I don't want to rehabilitate myself in their eyes. I'm trying to defeat all of them. This is possible. To put an end to their system of values where such words obtain a negative meaning. It's a semantic war. We need to rethink what is dangerous, what is philosophy, what is humanism, what is peace, what is a man, what is political modernity. Because I'm a

partisan of the Fourth Political Theory, and not liberalism, communism, or fascism. I can't defy myself. I'm totally anti-liberal, but I don't consider myself a communist or a fascist. That's my point. In my big book (over 1000 pages), called *The Fourth Political Theory*, I explain with many arguments the difference between my position and all three political theories. If you don't want to hear this, you can call me what you wish. It's your right to make your propaganda. It's all propaganda. I'm not a propagandist of one camp; I'm a philosopher of one camp. A philosopher is not so engaged in propaganda. To convince the other, I try to define, clarify, and crystalise some notions, concepts, ideas and elaborate some theories of illiberal ideology of the 21st century that from the very start should be distinguished from communism or fascism. I may fail. It's impossible to say. It's my intention to elaborate an anti-liberal, anti-globalist, anti-hegemonic theory in sociology, anthropology, philosophy, geopolitics that is outside of fascism and communism. This is my desire. This is Eurasianism, the Fourth Political Theory…

N: Would you say that this is your unique contribution to philosophy, your legacy if you will?

D: That's different. I'm trying to develop the Fourth Political Theory. If you are a liberal and you accuse me of being illiberal, I agree. If you accuse me of being a fascist or a communist, I disagree. It's my position. My Fourth Political Theory is a summary of my philosophical, geopolitical, political, anthropological, sociological, traditionalist searches during my life. The philosophical source of my vision is Western traditionalism based on the rejection of modernity and on the defence of tradition and the sacred. I also applied to my own Orthodox Christian theology and tradition a stronger traditionalist core of teaching. It's not only a repetition of the concepts of Guénon and Evola, but a creative application of these methods to the Orthodox Christian tradition. With this I've obtained a special vision of the Orthodox Christian tradition. And that was the reason I personally came to the Old Believer's tradition, as a consequence of my traditionalist attitude towards Russian Church history. So, in terms of religion, I'm an Old Believer, but philosophically I've always admired Heidegger. I have been studying Heidegger for almost forty years and I've come to the conclusion that he is a philosophical prophet. With him we reach the highest point in philosophy. He's not exactly a traditionalist, he's not in that line, but his philosophy is a brilliant source of inspiration. I try to apply Heidegger's ideas to my world vision, to traditionalism, to the Russian position. I have based my Fourth Political Theory on him. In my view, we need to revise some aspects of theology and Christian mysticism based on the concept of *Dasein*, and Heidegger's reading of religion. In the late 1980s and beginning of the 1990s, I discovered geopolitics. For me it was more than an application of the strategic study of international relations, it was a method that helped me much to understand the logic of history, international affairs, and what a civilisation

is. After studying Mackinder, Mahan and others in the field of geopolitics, I was fascinated by Carl Schmitt. He was a revelation for me because he added to geopolitics a special philosophical, historical dimension and transformed geopolitics into something more that applied strategic methods, geostrategy. I have developed his ideas too in different fields. It's his legacy for me. Recently, it surprised me when I was in Shanghai and asked an important Chinese thinker who were the most read Western authors in China. I was shocked by his answer: Martin Heidegger and Carl Schmitt. It is the same is Iran. There is a great tradition of Heidegger there. Ahmad Fardid was his pupil. He brought Heidegger's ideas to Iran. Henry Corbin is the other traditionalist who influenced Iranian thought. He was fascinated by Iranian Sufism, the Iranian Shia tradition, mysticism, and Iranian philosophy in general. This author had a great impact on me; he was Heidegger's student. Everything is around traditionalism, Heidegger, theology, Christian tradition, the metaphysics of Christianity, esoteric deep Islam, Hindu tradition and Daoism. The point is, it's difficult to understand religion in modernity. We need a key to open the door that leads from modernity to tradition. For me this is traditionalism, Martin Heidegger, Carl Schmitt, Henry Corbin, Georges Dumézil, Louis Dumont. I'm particularly fascinated by anthropology and sociology. I've discovered in these fields very intellectual tools not only to repeat traditionalist thoughts but to develop geopolitics. I was very influenced by structuralism and phenomenology by Husserl, who was Heidegger's teacher. Taken together, that's my legacy.

N: Recently, I went to the Scrovegni chapel in Padova and admired Giotto's magnificent frescos. But what particularly struck my eye was his depiction of the virtues and vices. What do you think is your noblest virtue and most shameful vice?

D: Virtues and vices are very personal. It is a moral judgement of ourselves, of our behaviour and attitude. It's so personal that we could share this only with a spiritual father and through him with God. It's a judgement that we give ourselves. It's an inner aspect, and not public. The confession of a sin is secret. Not because it's shameful (it is), but it should be secret because it concerns the deepest and innermost levels of the soul. It's a dialogue of the soul with itself, making this judgement (or hesitation of judgment) open to God. And speaking of virtue, anything that we can consider (judge) in the inner aspect of our soul as a virtue, doesn't belong to us. Everything beautiful, good, and meaningful doesn't belong to us. It's mentioned in the Psalms of David: 'Not to us, O Lord, not to us; but to thy name give glory'. There is no virtue that belongs to a human, every virtue is a gift of God. Our sins and vices belong to us, and we should deal with them ourselves. Everything successful and precious doesn't belong to us.

N: Well, that may indeed be the existential root of virtues and vices. But, Giotto, for example, specifically names and paints the great Christian virtues from fortitude to faith and hope etc, in order to inspire us in the case of the virtues or fill us with horror and shame in the case of the vices. So, I was referring more to the idea of Christian virtues

as points of orientation for our life, as goals for us to head towards. On that level, is there any particular virtue which you are striving for and any particular vice which you are ashamed of?

D: If you insist on this existential analysis, I would agree with Nietszche who said that virtues and vices have the same roots. They are not separate. They grow from the same root in that sense. Bravery is a virtue, but when we are too brave, we might be aggressive, dangerous, excessively proud — this is satanic. So, our virtue could be transformed into vice. Cowardice is a vice for a warrior. But if cowardice prevents you from harming another person, it may be a virtue. In the existential sense, not in the theological sense, I would say that self reliance is both my main vice and virtue. To be human is risky, it is to be a subject, which is a virtue and a sin. In theology, the virtue of a subject is to be united with the will of God, to be transparent. To be sinful is to be nontransparent, to rely on the lower ego. Self reliance in the sense of a virtue is reliance on the higher ego. I've overdeveloped my self-reliance in both senses. It's a sin and a virtue. That's where the threat is. We have no other threat except ourselves. That's my case too. I have an overdeveloped subjective feeling. I'm a bearer of the Radical Subject. I understand that it's not on an individual scale. It's very difficult to make this distinction with every breath. Both poles tend to be confused, which creates a constant danger. That's how it could turn into a virtue and could easily be transformed into sin. As a philosopher I see it as an archetype. This fusion of the two poles of self reliance can be the root of virtue and sin. That is the human problem. God created a human free, so he is not obliged to be good or to be bad. We are a subject. We are as free as God is. We lack his power, but we share freedom with him. If we use it properly, it is the way of *theosis*, of becoming like God in the Christian perspective. If we misuse it, we become devil worshipers of the Luciferian subject. That is the problem. That's the root of the main sin and virtue in my case. All the rest I consider to be secondary. That's the first sin I confess. I'm proud. It can be in a good and a bad way. If I confess it to be a sin, I'm proud to be myself. It may be an egoistic position. When it's a restoration of human dignity and the almighty form of human Logos in us, when it's an awakening of that during the philosophical, metaphysical contemplation, it's not egoistic at all; it's universal. It's more of a virtue. But they are always together, intermingled. If it was easy to distinguish black and white angels, then morality would be a childish game. The moral problem is important. We are similar in that. The threat is that you can take one for the other. We are a threat because both the angel and the devil live inside of us. It's an art to separate them. Both are mighty, great and attractive.

N: I have personally noticed that in your philosophical and theological approach to life, you tend to focus on the dour aspects of existence, on those things that stand in stark contrast to the following beautiful words of the Pope and Mother Teresa. The Pope said, 'Every day we should wake up with a smile and a sense of humour.' And then

there's a very touching phrase of Mother Teresa, who said, 'When your heart is full of hate, there's no room for love.' And we also have in the Catholic Church, maybe you do in Orthodoxy as well, what's called the 'Act of Charity', when we say: 'O my God because you are so good, I love you with all my heart and all my soul, and for your sake, I love my neighbour as myself.' So these ideas of joy, smiling, love, charity, and forgiveness towards the other, do you not find them lacking in your philosophical and theological approach to life?

D: Yes, I agree, maybe. This is not my strong point. But I agree with love for God and for our neighbours for the sake of God. These are the highest values. I don't think that there is no place for this in my philosophy. I just concentrate on different things.

N: At the expense of these greater things…

D: No, for example, Teresa d'Avila and all Orthodox fathers glorified love, charity and love for God. I'm humble in front of them, I'm in awe of them, I couldn't feel such beautiful things or say it better than they did. But these same authors said too little about the subject, time, the problem of the existential form of life. I try to fill the gap. There is no competition. I recognise their superiority. I admire those who speak of love sincerely, but I can't do it in the same way…

N: Perhaps this is the thing for you to aim for instead. As you said you've been working on philosophy, faith and geopolitics in a certain way for almost forty years now. In your final years of life, would it not be more interesting to instead focus on the highest elements of life, like love, love of your neighbour…

D: Quite possible. I could not explain it, but I didn't fulfil my mission yet in the field I'm currently working on. Now I'm approaching the end of my twenty-four volume magnum opus, which is called *Noomakhia*. And now that I am reaching the end of this task, I am asking myself, what's next? There are some political and geopolitical tasks to finish, and some ideas…

N: But, these are secondary, tertiary aims…Go for the highest goal…

D: I agree. My life has followed a plan that was created in my youth and fulfilled up to the smallest details. First of all, I was convinced that we needed to put an end to the USSR and go further, to free the Russian Logos, the Russian spirit outside of the communist structure and liberalism. That was in early 1980s. That was my aim, my goal, my task, not just a personal one; I had to be a part of the process. I tried to find alliances. I wrote the most important works then, in the beginning of the 1980s. Those were sketches of future works, future activity. And then there was the end of communism, the end of liberalism with Putin. Now there is the final stage ahead. But by fulfilling this agenda, I may be approaching the last stage of my life when I should change the main field of concern. I agree with that. But I'm not sure if it's possible. I didn't dedicate too much attention to this aspect, to charity, to love, to concern for neighbours, to the highest form of being. Love is the highest form of being.

N: Your spiritual father said a very interesting thing. He said that in the end, Christ will ask you not how much you suffered (or how much you cared about geopolitics, for example), but how much you loved. In short, are you not worried about your immortal soul because you have not devoted more of your life to love, the highest form of being?
D: I agree with this criticism and I think it's quite possible. But maybe my mission was more humble. Someone will enjoy salvation and mercy. I don't think that my destiny after life is clear. I've lived a dangerous life. I've thought dangerous thoughts. I'm in full danger, I'm a danger myself. I can't count on a granted positive answer, maybe because of lack of love, maybe for some other reason, maybe because I didn't fulfil the mission I should have in the right way, or maybe I've made a mistake. Who knows? It's difficult to say. But exterior events seem to confirm some logic in my plans from my early youth, that I'm doing the right thing. But I'm still on my way and I can't exclude that I will reach the highest dimension of life, which is love. I agree. I don't deny it. I haven't approached the highest form of life yet. It may be the next stage of my life. I'm approaching the end as everybody is. I have been dying consciously during those forty years, dying every moment. I live with death, face to face. For that reason, any time for me is the last time. So, I can't exclude that I'll approach this. Let's pray that it will be so.

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Notes

[←1]

Editor's note: From the Greek λόγος, Logos generally meant word, reason, or thought in classical and koine Greek. Marcus Aurelius, the Stoics, and others used it to denote a pervading rational principle that governed the universe and which humans shared in because of their ability to use reason and governance. For Dugin, the word entails a fundamental and irreducible world view, a way of seeing and interacting with the universe. The three Logoi that Dugin discusses most differ in their interpretation of nature, its constituents and man. We capitalise the word Logos to denote Dugin's unique use of it.

[←2]

Under-earthly. A special term used by Dugin in *Noomakhia,* from the Greek *kata,* meaning ‘under’ and *chthonic*, ‘earthly’.

[←3]

Editor's note: *nous*, from the Greek νοῦς, plural νόες, in classical Greek and in classical philosophy usually denotes the mind, the use of the intellect and its faculties, including judging, perceiving, etc.

[←4]

Editor's note: *Foundations of Geopolitics* (Основы геополитики), published in 1997, remains untranslated.

[←5]

Editor's note: Bruno Maçães formerly served as Portugal's Secretary of State for European Affairs. *The Dawn of Eurasia* was published in 2018.

[←6]

Editor’s note: In 2018, Moscow banned the British Council over allegations of spy activity. The cultural organisation had been active in Russia since the late 1950s.

[←7]

Editor's note: *Thalassocracy* and *tellurocracy*, while not exclusive to Dugin, are terms used in Dugin's geopolitical thought. Thalassocracy refers to empires that are largely sea-based and by nature more decentralised in government, whereas tellurocracy refers to a land-based empire that leans more toward centralisation and bureaucracy.

[←8]

Editor’s note: Old Believers are a sect of Russian Orthodoxy. They began as dissenters to the liturgical revisions brought in by Patriarch Nikon in 1652, intended to bring Russian practice in line with Greek practice. These revisions were rejected by many as innovations. The dissenters, considered schismatic, were excommunicated by the official Church. They have gone by the name of Old Believers or Old Ritualists since that time. More recently, the Russian Orthodox Church has initiated some efforts at rapprochement with the Old Believers.

[←9]

Editor's note: *The Primary Chronicle*, or *Russian Primary Chronicle* (Повѣсть временьныхъ лѣтъ, literally 'Tale of Bygone Years') is an Old East Slavic historical compilation produced in Kiev in 1113. It chronicles the years 850 to 1110.

[←10]
Editor’s note: From Greek νόμος, meaning ‘law’ or ‘custom’.

[←11]

Editor's note: In Orthodox canon law, the ordination of a bishop requires the laying on of hands by at least two other canonically recognised bishops.

[←12]

Editor's note: This is most likely a reference to Jesus' saying, 'For where two or three are gathered together in my name, there am I in the midst of them' (Matthew 18:20, Authorised Version/King James Version)

[←13]
Editor’s note: It is unclear which of Gaston Bachelard’s many titles Dugin is referring to.

[←14]

Editor's note: Dugin is using *corn* in the older English sense, meaning field grains in general and not specifically American maize, which has become the more common, modern meaning of corn.

[←15]

Editor’s note: This is perhaps more commonly known in Western sources by its Latin name *Magna Graecia*.

[←16]

Editor's note: *Starets* in Russian Orthodoxy refers to a wise, holy man or elder — almost always a monk — who is often sought for his wisdom and guidance, similar to the Greek Orthodox *geronda*. There is an entire sub-genre of Orthodox literature built around sayings of the *startsi* or elders.

[←17]

Editor's note: Dugin is referring to *Predestination* here, Calvin's notion that God's foreknowledge of events meant that the soul's end was already determined by God. This notion is largely viewed by the Orthodox Church as heretical.

[←18]

Editor's note: *Khora* — χώρα in Greek — originally meant the area immediately around the *polis*; Plato uses the term as an interval space of sorts.

[←19]

Editor's note: Nietzsche's original title in 1882 was *Die fröhliche Wissenschaft*, with *fröhlich* meaning 'cheerful' rather than 'funny'.

[←20]

Editor's note: Upon the death of Queen Elizabeth II in September 2022, Charles ascended the throne as King Charles III.

[←21]

Editor's note: In Orthodox tradition, *economia* refers to a bending of the rules in the interest of someone's spiritual growth or salvation.

[←22]

Editor's note: This phrase, 'keep your mind in hell', comes from the tradition of *the remembrance of death*, an ancient monastic teaching that reminding oneself of one's own impending death and judgement aids the Christian in avoiding sin.

[←23]
Editor’s note: More generally known in British and American English as cowpats, cow patties, or cow pies.

[←24]

Editor's note: Other sources identify Gandhi primarily as an attorney in his earlier life and report that his father was born into the Modh Baniya caste, a *varna* of the Vaishya caste.

[←25]

Editor’s note: This is likely a reference to Alexander Afanasyev’s *The Fiend*, or Упырь in Russian.

[←26]
Editor’s note: The title of this book could not be verified.

[←27]

Editor’s note: *Kitezh* (Ки́теж) is a mythical city in Russian lore, said to have sunk beneath a lake.

[←28]

Editor's note: *Volkodlak* (Russian волкодлак) literally means 'wolf hide', but more generally is an ancient Slavic term for 'werewolf'.

[←29]

Editor’s note: Ivan Kupala (Russian Иван Купала), sometimes known as ‘Kupala Night’, is a summer solstice celebration derived from Slavic pagan tradition; the celebration is known in Ukrainian, Polish, and Belorussian variants as well. It was eventually received into the Orthodox Church and associated with the feast of St John the Baptist.

[←30]

Editor’s note: The play on words here is that the last name Medvedev is related to the Russian word for bear: *medved* (Russian медведь).

[←31]

Editor's note: Redfield published an essay of the same name — 'The Folk Society' — in 1947 in *The American Journal of Sociology*.

[←32]

Editor's note: Hesychasm (Greek ησυχασμός) is the Orthodox monastic practice of seeking silence for the sake of inner prayer. It is specifically associated with the recitation of the 'Jesus Prayer'.

[←33]

Editor's note: *Homo Hierarchicus: Essai sur le système des castes* (1966), published in English by University of Chicago Press as *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and Its Implications*.

[←34]

Editor's note: *Essais sur l'individualisme: Une perspective anthropologique sur l'idéologie moderne* (1983); published in English by University of Chicago Press as *Essays on Individualism: Modern Ideology in Anthropological Perspective*.

[←35]

Editor's note: The *shahada* (Arabic شهادة) or 'testimony' that there is no god but God and Muhammad is His prophet.

[←36]

Editor's note: This is a rough paraphrasing of Matthew 5:29–30, which reads, 'And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee… if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.'

[←37]

This affirmation has proved to be wrong with the beginning of the ‘Special Military Operation’ in Ukraine on the 24 February 2022.

[←38]

In 2020 the pro-Putin State Duma gave permission to prolong presidential terms indefinitely in the case of Putin personally.

[←39]
Editor’s note: Published in 1945 by Routledge.